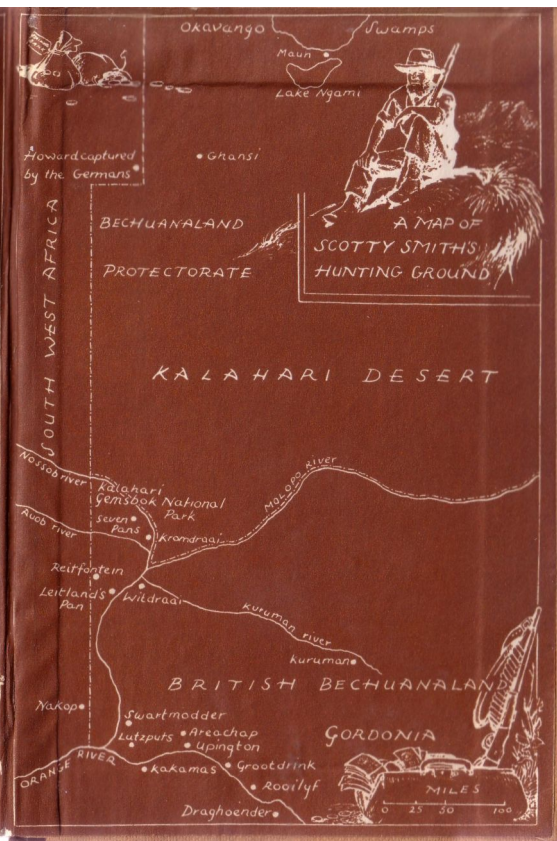
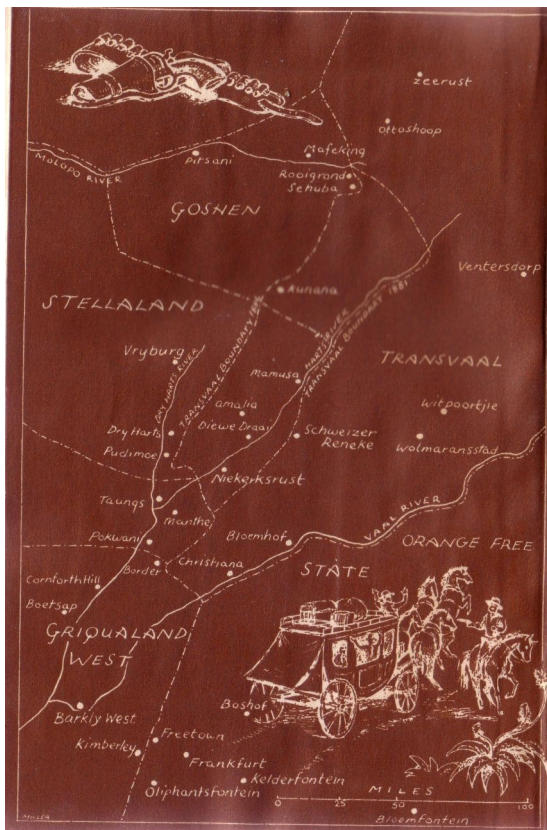
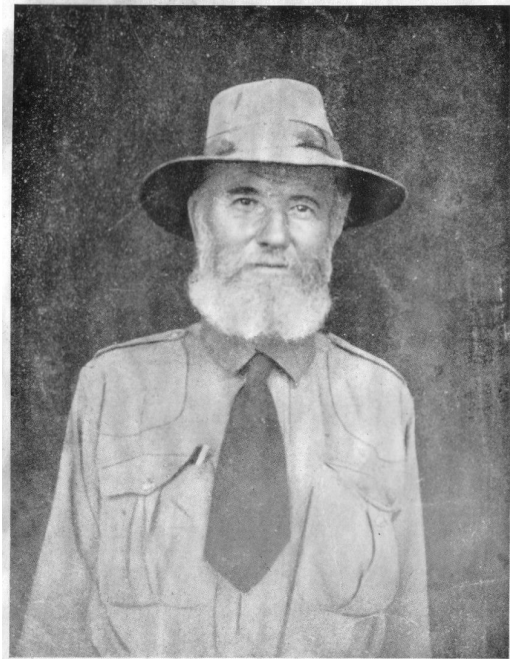






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This old and faded photograph of Scotty Smith was taken by the late Frank Solomon. It is one of the very few authentic portraits of Scotty Smith in existence and was used by Penny Miller as the basis for her oil painting on the cover of this book.

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FOREWORD

There are a good many inconsistencies in Scotty Smith's life and career, a state of affairs for which he himself is largely to blame. He was a born raconteur and in his old age he fell into the very human failing of always presenting his adventures in their most favourable and flattering light. Nor did he always stick to the same version when describing a particular event.

His chronicles have proved equally inconsistent. Apart from investing him with a military commission, which he never possessed, they have assigned him to a variety of overseas regiments; whereas the only definite information we have in this regard is that he was probably a trooper for a short time in a cavalry regiment and undoubtedly served in the ranks of a Highland regiment in India.

Many of the stories about Scotty have grown with the years. Some in fact are so fantastic that it has been found impossible to include them in this book. There is, for example, the account of how Scotty once escaped from the Bloemfontein gaol, impersonated the Free State President, appropriated his ceremonial coach, rode in state to the Raadzaal, and then slipped back into prison, without his jailers even realising that he had temporarily deserted them.

Other anecdotes of this type include Mr P.J. Rademan's description of how Scotty and some of his friends agreed to sleep in a deserted farm house in the Kimberley district in order to lay the ghost which was reputed to be haunting the building, only to be ignominiously routed by a young farmer who successfully impersonated the spectral visitor; or William Boyce's recital of the occasion on which the outlaw, hard pressed by a mounted policeman, jumped on a pet ostrich and made good his escape. The well-known South-African author, Douglas Blackburn, has also written some delightful fictional reminiscences about Scotty's duels with Transvaal officialdom, the most famous of which is his

humorous description of how the outlaw got the better of Piet Prinsloo, the notorious Landdrost of Vrededorp.

On his various expeditions, Scotty often disguised his identity by using aliases such as Swartz, Fincham, Piet Coetzee, Olivier, George Smith and Yetty Smith. Sometimes these were adopted from members of his gang. The real Swartz, for example, was a one-time associate of Scotty's, who operated mainly in the Ladybrand District, and in many ways emulated his more famous friend and former partner.

In addition a number of other desperadoes are known to have traded on Scotty's reputation, and to have used his pseudonym in order to inspire terror in the hearts of their victims. In any case, "Scotty Smith" is a very handy appellation and more than one South-African outlaw forestalled Gordon Lennox in its use.

One of the first of these was the Swellendam Scotty Smith, whose name is closely associated with the building of Bain's Kloof. Another was an unusual character, who operated as a horse-thief, cattle-rustler and gaolbreaker in the Transkei, and ran guns from Pondoland into Zululand as a sideline; and finally there was Spiero Smith alias Scotty Smith, who was arrested in 1895 by the Transvaal police at Doornfonteyn, and sentenced to a fine of £10 or a month's hard labour on charges of damage to government property and resisting arrest. He may or may not have been Gordon Lennox himself.

There is also a great deal of controversy about Scotty's birthplace, origin and early upbringing.

Scotty always maintained that his real name was George St Leger Gordon Lennox and that he was born in Perth in 1845. This claim to kinship with one of Scotland's most illustrious families is corroborated to some extent by what happened to him during the Indian Campaign of 1864-65, and by the testimony of various people who knew him during his later years.

On the other hand, my own researches have convinced me that while Scotty was undoubtedly well connected, his pretensions to legitimate relationship with the Gordon Lennox family and to the fact that his birthplace was Perth are difficult to substantiate. Obviously, if these claims have any validity, some record of a man bearing so illustrious a name would have been preserved in the neighbourhood where he was born and educated. But although at my request the Town Clerk of Perth consulted various reference books and made certain other investigations, he drew a complete blank.

"As you will no doubt be aware," he wrote to me, "Gordon Lennox is the family name of the Dukes of Richmond and Gordon, and so far as I can ascertain they have no family connections in Perth or Perthshire."

In support of this conclusion, I may add that Major G. Tylden, who compiled the first comprehensive bibliography of Scotty Smith and did a good deal of intensive research into his life and career, has informed me that, "Years ago a friend of mine, who knew the Gordon Lennox family well, asked them if they could trace any account of anyone of the kind having had any connection with the family. But, although they were interested and quite willing to help, the answer was in the negative. They knew absolutely nothing about Scotty ".

To-day Scotty Smith is such a legendary figure that it is extremely difficult to determine to what extent his various escapades have been exaggerated and dramatised. Described by various writers as the uncrowned King of the Kalahari, the Robin Hood of the Veld or the Captain Starlight of the Frontier, there is no doubt that his exploits and ingenious enterprises have become an integral part of our history. His actual adventures were, in fact, so daring, so skilfully contrived and so cleverly executed that he deserves to rank with a Dick Turpin, a Ned Kelly or a Jesse James in the rogues' gallery of the world's most picturesque and cunning gentlemen of the road.

FC METROVICH : 1962

Author of

The Development of Higher Education in South-Africa, 1873-1927

Assegai over the Hills

The Valiant But Once



Taken From: *To the River's End* by Lawrence GREEN

Scotty Smith with his wife and family—a photograph taken in Upington a few years before his death

CHAPTER ONE

BORN TO TROUBLE

During the course of its troubled history, South-Africa's northern frontier has produced many bad men who have defied the ordinary conventions and been a law unto themselves. But not one of these adventurous rogues and desperadoes has achieved the lasting fame or notoriety of Scotty Smith. Cattle-rustler and horse-thief, highwayman and outlaw, secret service agent and patriot, I.D.B. trafficker and confidence trickster, soldier of fortune and half a dozen other things besides, Scotty was loved and feared and hated throughout the border districts for nearly three decades.

In the best highwayman tradition he is always a loyal friend but a bitter enemy. He invariably robs the rich and befriends the poor. His quixotry endears him to the ordinary country folk, who never fail to protect and shield him when he is on the run. He is full of cunning plots and stratagems. He is a master of disguise. He is

ubiquitous and frequently turns up in the most unlikely places. He has the gift of vanishing almost at will, when hard pressed by the minions of the law, and no jail can hold him for long. He is as elusive as the Scarlet Pimpernel, and as daring as Brigadier Gerrard. Moreover his vast and intimate knowledge of the terrain in which he operates, stands him in good stead on numerous occasions.

In his time he plays many parts. One of these is to appear as the confidant of some rich, unsuspecting farmer, who loudly proclaims how he will deal with the notorious Scotty Smith, should that miscreant ever cross his path only subsequently to discover that his best stock or finest horses have disappeared and that the plausible stranger and the celebrated outlaw are one and the same person.

His favourite role, however, is that of the sympathetic traveller, who befriends and protects the lonely widow. She always apparently lives on an isolated farm and is in constant dread that her cattle will be raided and she will be ruined by

the terrible bandit and lawbreaker. But invariably when Scotty does eventually appear on the scene, her fears are proved groundless and she becomes one of his stoutest champions and defenders.

Who was this man, who achieved the rare distinction of becoming a legend during his own lifetime? The story which follows is based on the description of his youth and early adventures, which Scotty himself subsequently gave to some of his best friends.

His real name, he said, was George St Leger Gordon Lennox, and he was the eldest son of a Perthshire land owner. His father was fairly well off and provided him with a good education. This included courses in land surveying and veterinary science, both of which were to stand him in good stead in his future career in South-Africa. Gordon Lennox's prospects were very promising but from his earliest days he showed signs of the restless spirit which was soon to make him forsake his fatherland for ever, and seek a new home across the seas.

When he was eighteen years of age he joined a cavalry regiment and while training an incident occurred which illustrates both his imperious temper and his masterly horsemanship. One day his troop was exercising its horses on the beach near Aberdeen. Scotty was riding a high-spirited mount which obstinately refused to enter the water. At last, his patience exhausted, he decided to teach his recalcitrant steed a lesson. Turning round he rode back to where the sand was fairly soft. Then he deliberately waited his opportunity. The next time the horse reared and tried to unseat him he hurled himself out of the saddle, at the same moment giving the reins a violent jerk, which threw the animal neatly over on its back.

Shortly after this event the regiment was posted overseas and the future Scotty Smith found himself on his way to India. There he took part in the intermittent fighting which was being waged on the North-West Frontier. Many accounts of his career state that he held commissioned rank. There is, however, no official record of this, and it is much more

probable that he was attached to his regiment as a farrier or veterinary surgeon.

In any case his Indian service was short-lived. During the Umbeyla Campaign of 1864-1865, he gave the first indications of the genius he had for getting into trouble. A skirmish had taken place in the hills and the officer in charge of the small British force had been killed. The retreat was sounded but Gordon Lennox, ignoring this, assumed command and ordered the men to charge. They readily responded and succeeded in reaching their objective, but suffered fairly heavy casualties in the process. As a result their leader was court-martialled and cashiered for disobeying orders.

He himself claimed that his uncle was the commander-in-chief of the army. I have been unable to verify this. It is an undoubted fact, however, that the Duke of Cambridge did actually intervene on his behalf. As a result the enquiry was reopened, the verdict was set aside, and he was reinstated. But this experience of red tape convinced the young man that the army was

no place for him. He therefore secured his discharge and returned home, much to the delight of his father who wanted him to settle down, and thought that the best way to ensure this would be to get him safely married. In addition the old Scot had another object in view. His landowning neighbour had no sons, only daughters. By arranging a match between young Gordon Lennox and this man's eldest daughter he hoped to unite the two estates.

In furtherance of this plan he summoned his son to the library one day and told him bluntly what he had decided. Gordon Lennox, however, had other ideas.

"I'm very sorry, father," he said, "but I cannot do it."

Angered by this rank insubordination the Laird issued an ultimatum. "Either you carry out my wishes," he declared, "or I'll disinherit you."

He expected this time-honoured threat to have the desired effect. Instead his son looked sullenly at him.

"I cannot do it," he repeated.

"Very well, my boy," his father replied, "I'll give you ten days to make up your mind."

On the tenth day the old man was reading in the library when his son entered and the following terse but dramatic interview took place:

"Well George, have you decided?"

"Yes, father."

"Are you agreeable to doing what I want?"

"No, sir, I'm sorry but..."

"Then you're no longer a son of mine. You may go." George St Leger Gordon Lennox walked defiantly out of the room, and that was the last time he spoke to his parent or had any other communication with him. Shaking the dust of his native country off his feet, and not caring very much where he went, he boarded a ship sailing for Australia.

This is Scotty's personal account of how he came to leave Scotland, and it was subsequently

corroborated in a most unexpected manner by a woman member of the old laird's household staff, who had immigrated to South-Africa. One day she met a man, who happened to be a great friend of Scotty's. When she discovered this she told him that she had actually been present during the fateful interview between Scotty and his father. According to her story she was sitting unobtrusively in an alcove in the library doing some needlework, when Scotty came in and she heard every word that was spoken.

There are, however, numerous other versions of the event which led to Scotty's abandoning his homeland.

One of the more fanciful is that as a young man he joined the army and was drafted to Portugal. While serving there he fell in love with a beautiful Portuguese girl of high rank, who was also being courted by a Portuguese officer. A bitter feud developed between the two men and Scotty's rival challenged him to a duel. The young Scot accepted. As he had the choice of weapons he selected pistols. He was already an

expert with all kinds of firearms and in the resulting fight he killed his opponent.

There was a tremendous outcry and he was forced to flee the country. He managed to reach his native land in safety, but on his family's advice decided it would be wiser to get right out of Europe. He therefore sold his inheritance for £20,000 and left Scotland for ever.

It was during the long voyage to Australia that Gordon Lennox obtained the sobriquet by which he was ever afterwards known. On board the ship were two thoroughbred horses and he noticed that one of them was suffering considerable pain from a badly fitting shoe which was pinching its hoof. He immediately approached the captain and informed him of the fact.

"Well," said the latter, "what can I do about it?"

"If you'll give me the necessary permission, sir," was the reply, "I'll put the matter right."

"Carry on," the captain ordered.

Gordon Lennox went back to the animal, removed the offending shoe, pared the hoof and expertly replaced the shoe. He was already known among the passengers as Scotty because of his nationality. Some of them had watched the operation and had admired the adroitness with which he had performed it, and so they began calling him "Scotty the Blacksmith". This was soon abbreviated to Scotty Smith, a title by which he was ever afterwards known.

On its way to Australia the ship touched at the Cape and Scotty saw, for the first time, the country which was subsequently to be the scene of his most famous exploits. Arriving in Australia he began practising his veterinary calling, but before long the lure of gold attracted him to the diggings. His luck was out, however, and he was obviously not destined to make a fortune as a miner. Instead he ran into very grave trouble.

One day the camp was aroused by screams of pain. Scotty went to investigate and saw a huge, hulking miner thrashing a youngster, not yet out

of his teens: A crowd of men were standing watching, but no one dared to interfere. Scotty, however, with his usual quixotry immediately intervened.

"Leave the boy alone!" he shouted.

The bully turned on him. "Mind your own business," he roared, and without further ado he pulled out a revolver.

But before he could fire, Scotty had drawn his own gun and had shot him dead. Even for those lawless times, however, his action was considered too drastic. There was a hue and cry after him, and he had to run for it. He was fortunate enough to escape, and the distinct possibility exists that at this stage in his career he became an outlaw and took to the Australian bush. In fact there is such a marked similarity between his subsequent South-African exploits and those of Captain Starlight, the legendary hero of Ralph Boldrewood's famous book, *Robbery Under Arms*, that some writers have suggested the

author may have modelled his fictitious character on Scotty.

It is much more probable, however, that feeling the country was getting too hot to hold him, he boarded a ship which was sailing for America. He disembarked at New York and became friendly with one of the city barmaids. Before long they were keeping company and this passing attachment soon involved him in a most humiliating situation.

One day he walked into the bar where his girl was employed. And then he stopped dead. At the counter was a huge fellow with his arm round the barmaid, whispering endearments in her ear.

With a furious exclamation Gordon Lennox strode up to the stranger. "Leave my girl alone !" he yelled, and slapped his rival's face. The latter immediately retaliated and the next moment the two were going for one another.

Gordon Lennox was young, agile, powerfully built and six feet two inches in height. But all his strength, courage and pugnacity proved of no

avail. Before long he had been reduced to a bruised, battered wreck. With the blood streaming from his face, he was eventually forced to give in. Only then did he learn the mistake he had made. His conqueror was the heavyweight champion of the New York police force!

The young Scot's wounds soon healed. He had, however, been deeply shamed, and there was only one way he could restore his self-respect. He must pay his opponent out in his own coin. But although he was burning with revenge he realised that to tackle so formidable an antagonist again, without adequate training, would be to court disaster. He therefore set about preparing himself systematically for the return bout.

His first step was to engage the services of a well-known pugilist who was noted for his rough-house tactics.

"I want you to teach me all the tricks of the trade," he told this man. "I've got a month and then I'm going to knock that fellow's block off."

He mentioned the champion's name and the ex prize-fighter whistled.

"That's rather a tall order," he exclaimed. Then he looked at Lennox's magnificent physique. "You sure have the body, son," he muttered in admiration. "Well, we'll see what we can do."

With grim determination the young Scot settled down to training. He proved an apt pupil and within the month felt that he was ready to revenge his defeat. He had studiously kept away from the scene of his disgrace, but now, deliberately choosing a time when he knew that the policeman would be there, he entered the bar. He immediately saw his rival at the counter. Casually taking his place a few feet away from him, he ordered a brandy.

A startled expression flitted across the bar-maid's face as she served him, but she said nothing. Scotty drained his glass.

"Another," he growled.

The second glass did not follow the same course as its predecessor. Holding it poised for a moment in his hand, he turned round slowly before hurling its contents into his enemy's face. With a snarl of rage the latter wiped the brandy out of his eyes. Then he saw who had done this unforgivable thing to him.

"What," he roared. "It's you again is it? Come for some more, have you?" And he prepared to give the presumptuous young Scot the thrashing of his life.

The fight which followed was talked about for many years afterwards by the men who were fortunate enough to be in the bar that afternoon. This time, however, the two antagonists were much more evenly matched, and both took a good deal of punishment from one another's fists. In the end Gordon Lennox began to gain

the upper hand, and he then proceeded to give his opponent an unmerciful beating. As he used to describe it to his friends in later life, "I administered to him the grandfather and grandmother of all hidings, so that even his parents wouldn't have been able to recognise him."

Soon afterwards Scotty left America and returned to Europe. He arrived to find that the Franco-Prussian War had broken out and he immediately offered his services to the French. During one of the battles he was wounded and captured by the Germans. He became a prisoner-of-war and was only released when hostilities ceased. To his dying day, however, he carried a memento of this war - a scar on his forehead, where a spent bullet had struck him.

A couple of years later we find him fighting for the Carlists in the war of 1872-1876. In the end, the attempt to restore Don Carlos of Bourbon to the Spanish throne failed dismally, and Scotty looked round for another country in which he could live dangerously.

His choice fell on the Cape of Good Hope. In 1877 he joined the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police and set out for South-Africa - a country which was to be his home for over forty years, and in which he was to gain undying fame as a horse-thief, cattle-lifter and outlaw.

CHAPTER TWO

DESERTER AND PHILANTHROPIST

In selecting South-Africa as his future sphere of operations, Scotty Smith could hardly have made a more fortunate choice from his own point of view. At the time the country was split up into a number of separate, disunited states, some of which were so weak and unstable that it was only with the greatest difficulty that they managed to survive at all. Torn by racial and political dissensions, menaced by constant Native wars and unrest, and with hopelessly inadequate police forces, they were a happy hunting ground for freebooters, filibusters, and adventurers of all kinds. In the border areas law and order were practically non-existent. There

were no extradition treaties and the diamond and gold discoveries were soon to offer rich and glittering rewards to those daring enough to seize them.

Scotty arrived at the Cape in 1877 and almost immediately he was thrown into the kind of activity in which he delighted. There have been nine official Kafir wars in South-Africa. Scotty appeared on the scene just in time to take part in the very last of these, the Galeka-Gaika revolt of 1877. The campaign ended in the following year and he was then stationed at Kokstad as a military farrier. For some months he and a man called Broome were quartered together, and the latter has left this slight but interesting recollection of what Scotty Smith was like at the time.

"All I can remember of him in any way noteworthy was as a wiry red-bearded young fellow, with a curious look of preoccupation and a disposition to gamble and sing occasionally, most deplorably out of tune."

During the Ninth Kafir War and the subsequent Griqua rebellion of 1880 Scotty had been in his element. But he was no peacetime soldier, and when hostilities ceased he found it increasingly difficult to submit to the ordinary routine of army life. At one particular saddle parade, for example, he could not be bothered polishing his saddle and burnishing his bit, spurs and stirrup irons to the requisite pitch of perfection. Instead he coolly placed his uncleaned accoutrements on the ground where their dirty, rusty appearance showed up in strong contrast to the gleaming equipment of the other men. He was promptly disciplined by his commanding officer for committing so heinous an offence. Instead of this teaching him a lesson he treated the matter with indifference, and simply left his gear on the parade ground in the mud and rain until late the following day.

About this time Scotty's financial affairs, which he had entrusted to the Bank of Glasgow, became somewhat involved. His presence in Scotland was urgently needed in order to

straighten out matters. Calmly deserting from his regiment, he proceeded to his native land and put matters right. He then returned to the mounted police and was presumably punished for his dereliction from duty, although there is no record of this. He was next sent to King William's Town where he finally decided to sever his connection with army life and to begin the long career of horse-thieving and brigandage which was to make his name a household word in Southern Africa. Even his desertion was typical of the man. He absconded with two of the best police horses!

It is impossible to give the correct chronological order of Scotty Smith's various adventures and escapades. But it seems probable that the stratagem which he employed at Fort Beaufort was the very first of these, and took place shortly after his defection from the army. In his old age he was inordinately proud of this episode, which is understandable because in none of his subsequent exploits did he ever quite

reach the same heights of quixotry and ingenuity as he did on this occasion.

Any ordinary man in his position would have put as much distance between himself and King William's Town as possible. But Scotty, who was a master of disguise, always did the most unexpected things. As a result he rode no further than Fort Beaufort, which was only about fifty miles away. There, he disposed of the stolen horses and, his real identity undetected, he obtained a job with a road construction gang as an assistant foreman. Scotty could, if he wished, be the most congenial of companions and he and the foreman soon became great friends.

The road they were building passed through numerous farms from whose owners they received much kindness and consideration. In particular, they were very hospitably entertained by a lonely but rich old couple, at whose home there was always a bed and a meal waiting for them. Unfortunately, not long after this, the old man died and, when the will was read, an amazing disclosure was made. Practically

everything he possessed had been bequeathed to the lawyer who was managing his affairs, while his wife had been left penniless.

With almost indecent haste the lawyer wound up the estate and put the assets up to auction. Altogether about £10,000 was realised and was deposited to his account in the local bank. The widow was too frail and heartbroken to take any action, but Scotty was suspicious. Using his own methods he obtained the will, studied it carefully, and came to the conclusion that it was a forgery. He therefore sent it to the bank manager together with a statement embodying his suspicions and recommending that the signatures on the will should be tested by a handwriting expert. In addition he decided to take independent action to help the widow in case nothing came of his suggestion.

On the very night on which the money was deposited, a stealthy figure might have been seen slinking through the sleeping village. The following morning Fort Beaufort woke to a scene of tense excitement. The bank had been

broken into and £10,000 had been stolen. The police were summoned but there was not a single clue to the identity of the thief. As a result it was rumoured that a reward of £1,000 was to be offered for his capture.

A few days later Scotty and the foreman were sitting in their camp talking. The latter looked very worried and Scotty asked him what was wrong.

"It's my wife," the foreman replied. "She's seriously ill and needs specialist treatment. That'll cost money and I haven't a bean. Now if only I could capture the bank robber ..." and he looked wistfully into space.

"Why," Scotty laughed, "if that's all that's troubling you, we'll soon put it right."

"How can we do that?" the man asked.

"I know who the robber is," Scotty remarked nonchalantly. "I can lay my hand on him whenever I want to."

"What !" cried the excited man, "you actually mean to tell me that---"

"Yes," Scotty agreed, "but first come with me and let's get this reward business straightened out."

They set out for the bank and when they arrived Scotty asked to see the manager.

"I've got certain information," he told him, "which'll put you on the track of the man you're after. I must, however, make sure about the reward. Are you prepared to sign a written undertaking that the £1,000 will be paid to the person who gives you the information which'll lead to his arrest, and to the recovery of the money?"

"Certainly," the manager replied, and he accordingly drew up and signed a statement to this effect. Scotty looked at it and saw that it was in order.

"Right," he cried. "You'll be hearing from us soon. There are one or two things I have to do first and then we'll be back."

They returned to their camp, and when they got there Scotty gave his friend the manager's statement.

"Take care of this," he remarked, "and the money's as good as in your pocket."

"I don't understand what you mean," the foreman exclaimed.

"It's quite plain;" Scotty paused dramatically. "You see, I'm the chap who broke into the bank."

"What! You! I don't believe it:"

"It's true all right, so all you have to do to claim the reward is to hand me over, and I'll see to it that the bank gets its money back."

"Never," his horrified companion protested. "You're my friend. I can't possibly betray you. It's out of the question."

"Oh, don't worry about me," Scotty casually assured him. "As soon as you've received the cash, I'll make my getaway. No jail in South-Africa'll hold me for long."

At first the foreman would have nothing to do with the scheme. But Scotty could be very persuasive when he liked, and eventually he induced his friend to change his mind. Together they returned to the bank and a policeman was summoned. He arrested Scotty and lodged him in the local jail. The manager, however, refused to part with the reward until the money had been recovered, and so the foreman went sadly away, wondering why his friend had done such a foolish thing, and all for nothing.

But Scotty had his plans worked out. True to his promise he did not remain in captivity for long. After his apprehension, his lodgings had been carefully searched. No trace of the missing banknotes had, however, been discovered. This was naturally a matter of grave concern to the manager and so at the first opportunity he visited Scotty in his cell and broached the subject.

"Tell me first," Scotty rejoined. "Has anything been done about the will?"

"Yes," the manager conceded. "You were quite right, of course. The signatures were definitely forged. The police now have the matter in hand and you can rest assured that the lawyer will be punished and the widow justly treated. You did a good deed there, all right, Scotty. The money really belongs to her, which makes it all the more incomprehensible to me why you stole it."

"It should be obvious," the prisoner pointed out. "I don't trust the law and I was making absolutely certain that whatever happened she'd get her just dues."

"I understand," the manager nodded his head. "So you were going to give her the money, were you? But I don't see how she's going to get it now. And surely you must realise the mess you've put me in."

Scotty looked straight at him. "Well, sir," he remarked, "I've a proposition to make. You've played the game about the will, and now I'm prepared to be straight with you. If you'll

accompany me, I'll show you where the notes are hidden on one condition. You must come alone. I don't want anyone else to know where I've concealed them."

The manager was a middle-aged man and was fairly robust, but he hesitated. It was so obvious that he was afraid to entrust himself to Scotty that the latter burst out laughing.

"You've nothing to worry about," he roared. "I'll be handcuffed and you can tie a rope to my saddle if you like."

The bank official was still dubious. As Scotty, however, remained obdurate and he was really perturbed about the money, he at length gave in.

"All right," he finally agreed. "I'll take a chance."

"It's quite a long way," Scotty pointed out, "so you'd better take some food along for us."

The next day the manager obtained the necessary police permission and then they set out on horseback on their quest: Actually the hiding

place was not as far away as Scotty had pretended, but he wanted some time to make his escape, and so he led the manager by a most circuitous route. At last, shortly after midday, they came to a clearing in the bush with two or three low mounds of earth showing through the grass.

"I think we'd better have our lunch now," he suggested: It was a hot day and the older man had been feeling the pace, so he was glad to have a rest. They sat down on a couple of the mounds and he took out some sandwiches and a bottle of cold coffee.

"You'll have to feed me," Scotty joked. "I can't possibly eat like this," and he held out his manacled hands. For a little while they ate their lunch in silence and then Scotty, who had exceptionally slender hands for a man of his size, unobtrusively slipped the handcuffs off his wrists. As his unsuspecting companion leant forward to give him another sandwich, he suddenly felt himself seized in an iron grip. There was a brief struggle but the bank official

was no match for his hefty opponent. Within a few minutes he had been overpowered and neatly trussed up.

"Now," Scotty pointed out, "the tables are turned. You're my prisoner, and I could easily make off with the notes, but I've never yet broken my word and I don't intend doing so now. I promised to take you to the money and I've fulfilled my promise. It's there."

He pointed dramatically to the mound on which the manager was lying.

"You've nothing to fear," Scotty continued. "It's not far to the town and I'll tell the first man I meet where you are." Then, mounting one of the horses, he rode off.

Again Scotty honoured his promise, and in due course a search was made for the missing banker and he was rescued. The mound was dug up and the money recovered. Once more there was a country-wide hue and cry for the audacious deserter and jail-breaker. But it proved

fruitless. By that time Scotty was riding hard for the north.

This story has a happy sequel for Scotty's friend, the road construction foreman. The bank had recovered its missing money, and technically Scotty had been arrested, so it decided to pay out the promised reward. As a result the foreman was able to send his wife away for the specialist treatment she so badly needed.

For a time Scotty made his headquarters in the vicinity of Kimberley. From there he began raiding the farms of the more prosperous and well-to-do farmers in the Transvaal and the Free State, lifting their livestock and generally playing havoc with their attempts at horse-breeding and cattle-raising.

As long as Scotty confined his activities to the two Dutch Republics, the Cape authorities, in spite of his record as a deserter, escaped prisoner, and bank-robber, did not interfere unduly with his movements. It was quite another matter, however, when they found that he was

extending his operations to their side of the border and was indulging in such lucrative but illegal sidelines as I.D.B., gun-running, and similar pursuits.

Soon the police were on his track and although he managed to keep out of their clutches, he realised that his luck would not hold indefinitely. He therefore decided that it would be healthier to move further into the interior beyond the reach of the authorities. He rode off three hundred miles northwards to the small isolated Transvaal village of Zeerust.

Here law and order were simply non-existent and the rule of the gun held sway. The strong flourished and the weak went to the wall. In this congenial atmosphere Scotty had an uproarious time. The little frontier town was crowded with men after his own heart unscrupulous adventurers from all parts of the globe, who had congregated in this wild area with only one object in view, to make easy fortunes with the least possible effort.

These tough desperadoes haunted the notorious "Zeerust Club", which had its headquarters at the "Bucket of Blood" hotel, where everything was laid on to suit the heart of even the most fastidious bandit billiards, gambling and booze. The only articles in somewhat short supply were women. There were just sufficient of these to incite and lend spice to the incessant drunken brawls, bouts of fisticuffs and gun duels, which added so much to the enjoyment and pleasure of all concerned.

Scotty took to this congenial company with delight. Here he met such choice characters as Jimmy McGilivray, whose daring cattle-rustling exploits almost rivalled his own, James W. Honey, who was later to come to a violent if somewhat mysterious end, and a host of lesser lights.

There was nothing exclusive about membership of the "Zeerust Club". But it was certainly an expensive hobby belonging to it, especially as its proprietor, Henry Martin, was known to be violently allergic to customers who sampled his

wares and then were unable to pay for them. In order to avoid this embarrassing situation most of its habitués went in for various questionable methods of acquiring ready cash. Scotty, of course, had a ready source of income at hand. All he had to do was to continue his cattle-raiding and horse-lifting exploits. He carried these out so successfully that the local farmers came to curse the day that had brought him to live among them. In fact, stock-breeding became a nightmare on the ranches in the district. There was little, however, the owners could do about it.

But fortunately for the more peaceful farmers in the area, Scotty did not remain very long in Zeerust. He was always possessed of a roving disposition, which made him move continually from place to place. And about this time events were happening in the new republics of Goshen and Stellaland, which drew him southwards.

CHAPTER THREE

FREEBOOTER AND FILIBUSTER

For some years Scotty made the wild country, bordering on Taungs, Vryburg and Mafeking and extending westwards through the Kalahari Desert to the frontier of German South West Africa, his hunting grounds. In the early 'eighties of last century this area, most of which became in after years the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland, was a real no-man's-land, in which law and order were non-existent and success in life depended on the primitive precept:

The good old rule, the simple rule,

The power to take and hold.

Much of this huge territory is desert country, but on its eastern boundary lies a fertile strip of land through which once ran the famous route known as the Missionaries' Road, and which was used not only by the religious pioneers but also by traders, adventurers, explorers and big-game hunters on their way into the interior. Over half a

century before, the powerful Bechuana tribes in this region had been partly destroyed by Mzilikazi's terrible impis, and had only escaped complete annihilation by fleeing for sanctuary into the sandy wastes. When the Matebele power was finally crushed in the late 'forties, the remnants of these people crept cautiously out of hiding and under various petty chiefs began to rebuild their tribes. In the ensuing struggle for power, a good deal of internecine strife took place and the services of white filibusters, with their guns and ammunition, were eagerly welcomed.

As a result, a fine assortment of rogues, ne'er-do-wells, desperadoes and soldiers of fortune gathered from all parts of Africa in search of easy pickings. These freebooters offered their services to the rival chieftains at the usual price a substantial share in the cattle, land and other loot, which could be snatched from their defeated enemies.

With the scramble for Africa and the opening up of the interior during the latter half of the

nineteenth century, the Missionaries' Road suddenly assumed an added importance, and became a valuable political pawn in the struggle for land and power south of the Limpopo. Of the interested parties, the Transvaal Republic, ever eager to enlarge its frontiers, began to cast eyes on the territory through which the road passed. Down at the Cape the rising young millionaire politician, Cecil Rhodes, quickly realised that the closing of "The Suez Canal of the Interior" would block the colony's expansion to the north and end his dreams of extending British influence from the Cape to Cairo. In addition the Imperial Government was giving serious consideration to the question of taking over Bechuanaland. To complicate matters still further the new western boundary of the South-African Republic, as laid down by the Pretoria Convention of 1881, had cut in half the lands of many of the petty chiefs who had been the allies of President Burgers.

Gradually from the confused welter of plotting, alliance-making, bargaining and

fighting which was taking place among the various chieftains in this troubled area, a somewhat unstable pattern began to emerge. In the north were the two Baralong rivals for power, the pro-British Montsioa of Sehuba, and the pro-Boer Moshette of Kunana. In the south were their counterparts, the Batalapin chief, Mankoroane, at Taungs, and the Korana chief, Massouw, at Mamusa.

Under these circumstances the land was a veritable paradise for the filibusters and freebooters. The fighting between the different tribes was usually spasmodic and not of a very serious nature. The white adventurers were able to devote most of their time and energy to making their own fortunes. In pursuance of this policy they even formulated a definite line of action which aimed at acquiring as much booty as possible at a minimum risk to themselves. In fact they went so far as to draw up a gentleman's agreement that, if circumstances forced them to fire at one another, they would deliberately aim high. So meticulously was this convention

observed that in my researches I have been able to discover the names of only two white men, a Louw and a Fourie, who were actually killed during these so-called battles and skirmishes.

Actually these freebooter engagements were usually comic opera affairs, in which victory frequently went to the side able to put on the most spectacular military demonstration. Usually there was much taunting of the enemy, screaming of war cries, exhortations from the leaders, and firing of guns. These guns, stolen from missionaries or purchased at exorbitant prices from gunrunners, were as a rule obsolete old muzzleloaders, long past their prime. This was not, however, of vital importance as they were judged on the din they created rather than the effectiveness of their firepower. As a matter of fact, when loaded with jagged stones, lengths of trek chain, pot legs, broken kettle spouts, pieces of plough shares, and other odd bits of ironmongery, they often proved more dangerous to their owners than to the enemy. This was especially the case when two or three times the

normal charge of gunpowder had been rammed down their ancient barrels. Firearms of all kinds did, however, play a very important part in boosting the morale of the tribes, while possession of a cannon was looked upon as a trump card of the first magnitude.

In the early 'eighties, the Transvaal freebooters in the north were having by far the better of things. Their protégé, Moshette, had appointed Niklas Gey van Pittius as his agent. In 1882, with his assistance, the chief had inflicted a crushing defeat on Montsioa and had laid his capital, Sehuba, in ruins. As a result a large piece of the latter's land was confiscated and was used for the establishment of the puppet republic of Goshen.

Further south, things had also gone badly for the pro-English section. There Massouw, the leader of a small but compact clan of Korana-Hottentots, was causing a great deal of trouble. The ancestors of these Hottentots had originally lived on the shores of Table Bay, but the expansion of European civilisation had gradually

forced them further and further into the interior. In their wanderings every man's hand had been against them and they were continually fighting to preserve their existence. Moving ever northwards they had eventually established themselves at Mamusa on the west bank of the Harts River, where they had converted a natural hill fortress into a strong bastion and on its summit had constructed a rough stone fort.

In October 1881, Mankaroane and his white allies had launched an ill-advised attack on Mamusa, but had been defeated and driven back in confusion. Massouw, on the advice of his white friends, then decided to offer a farm, and half the loot captured, to every European who agreed to fight for him.

To his credit it must be recorded that the Hottentot chief also laid down the condition that no huts were to be burnt or women and children molested. This rule was generally observed not only by his own men but also by those of the enemy.

The generous terms proposed by Massouw attracted numerous freebooters to his cause. Soon he had an army of 400 desperadoes, under Sarel Petrus Celliers, at his disposal. He put these troops into laager at a place called Manthe and from there they kept up a constant series of raids on Mankaroane's herds. To add to his troubles the latter had fallen out both with his English allies and with Montsioa, and was also being hard pressed by Gasibone, the chief of a rival Batlapin tribe.

At this stage Mankaroane tried to recoup his losses by attacking Massouw at Fourie's Graf, with disastrous consequences. Not only was he defeated but he suffered a shattering political setback - his ship's cannon, the pride and joy of his heart, was captured. This was a very serious blow to his prestige and as a result many of his tribesmen deserted him.

Such was the state of affairs when one bright day Scotty rode into the straggling native township of Taungs. At the time Scotty was about thirty-seven years of age. He was a very

striking personality. He had a thick red beard, heavy eyebrows, bright blue eyes and a ruddy face. In perfect physical condition, he had a beautifully-proportioned, well-built body. He was also as hard as nails and as wild as a hawk.

It did not take him long to size up the situation and to realise the possibilities. He arranged an interview with Mankaroane on whom he made a great impression. With his stock at low ebb and smarting from his recent defeat at the hands of Massouw, the chief eagerly welcomed his new ally, and with acumen rare in a primitive ruler, he outlined the plan of campaign which he proposed to adopt.

"We are too weak," he told Scotty, "to drive the Boers out of the country, so we must stop them from settling down. We must raid their camps. We must steal their cattle. We must rob them of their horses. We must keep them shut up in a laager. In this way they will be so busy protecting their own herds that they will have no time to attack us. When they find they cannot remain in peaceful occupation of the farms they

have stolen from us, they will get tired and will return to their own country."

No proposition could have been more acceptable to the newcomer and he certainly made the most of the opportunity which fate had afforded him. Before long he had recruited his own private army, a well-organised, well-armed little force of about thirty whites and double that number of blacks.

With this miniature army to back him, Scotty threw himself wholeheartedly into the fray. So successfully did he carry out the chief's policy of attrition that on more than one occasion he made a clean sweep of the cattle belonging to a particular Boer encampment. Even at this early stage of his career in South-Africa he was able to boast that he had already stolen over 750 horses.

Scotty did not confine himself to horse-lifting and cattle raiding. If he required arms, ammunition, clothing or provisions for his men he did not scruple to break into some convenient store and take what he needed. It is known, for

example, that about this time he burgled the shop of Charles Daly at Bloemhof.

Charles Daly, himself, was a character in his own right. A survivor of the wreck of the Birkenhead, he had made his way into the Transvaal and had set up as a trader and merchant. In course of time he established himself at Bloemhof, and became a great friend of Paul Kruger. During the Stellaland-Goshen disturbances he was given a magazine licence by the Transvaal Government, and was in fact the only man permitted to supply the republican forces with arms, ammunition, and provisions.

His shop was well stocked and proved a natural target for Scotty Smith. One day its owner arrived to find that during the night his store had been raided and denuded of goods. There was no doubt who the culprits were. Attached to the door was a postcard on which was written a complete list of what had been taken. The postcard was signed by Scotty Smith and some of his gang, as a token of good faith that the stolen articles would be paid for in due

course. Whether this was ever done has not been recorded. But, strangely enough, Scotty was usually absolutely scrupulous in keeping his word when he gave an assurance of this kind, as witness the following story related to me by Mr J.H. Burke of the farm Brandhout, in the Mafeking District.

Once Scotty was in a very tight corner. Hemmed in by the police, his plight was so desperate that he actually had to abandon his horse, a thing he would never have done except as a last resort. However, by means of a ruse, he managed to escape and trekked across the veld on foot.

Eventually he came to a rough wagon track and following this he overtook some African transport riders in charge of two or three wagons. Scotty asked them to whom the outfit belonged. They told him that it was the property of Jan Coetzee.

"The baas," they explained, "has ridden ahead, as we are not far from the house."

On receiving this information Scotty appeared to be highly delighted.

"Look," he exclaimed, " I'm Piet Coetzee, Jan Coetzee's nephew. You must give me a lift."

He climbed into the wagon, lay down inside the tent, and went to sleep. He was awakened by the sound of approaching horses and then he heard someone asking the boys whether they had seen him. Much to his relief they answered, "No," and the next moment the men had turned their horses and had ridden off in a different direction.

When they reached the farm, Scotty introduced himself to Mr Coetzee as his nephew, Piet. In those days most of the Boer families had so many nephews and nieces that Oom Jan did not for one moment doubt Scotty's story. He took him inside and told his wife who he was.

Scotty was immediately invited to sit down and was treated with the greatest hospitality. Everything went well until the Coetzees tried to find out to which branch of the family he

belonged. As they tracked down his supposed relationship he became more and more embarrassed until at last he was fairly cornered. Then he took the bold way out. Putting his cards on the table he openly confessed who he was. He followed this up by giving the old couple a completely truthful account of what had happened to him, and finally asked Jan if he would be good enough to let him have a horse.

"I haven't any money on me at the moment," he told his host, "but I promise faithfully to pay you when I can."

"Of course, I'll give you what you want," Oom Jan agreed. "You know, Scotty, I've been told a good deal about you, and its common talk that you've helped a lot of people in your time."

Mr Coetzee was as good as his word. He provided Scotty with a fine chestnut pony, complete with saddle and bridle, and his wife supplied him with a packet of food for the journey.

Scotty rode away and for some time nothing more was heard of him. Then one day Oom Jan was on the Johannesburg market square when a man came up and spoke to him. At first he could not remember who it was, but when Scotty told him that he wanted to pay for the horse he had borrowed it all came back to him.

"How much do you want for the animal?" Scotty asked. Coetzee named his price, and Scotty promptly paid him double the sum he had requested.

"You see, Oom Jan," he explained, "that pony made it possible for me to escape, and so was worth much more to me than its actual value in money."

Like all good soldiers the Stellaland-Goshen freebooters had soon acquired their own particular marching song. There are various versions of this ditty, but I append two stanzas which were recited to me by Col. A.S. Taylor and Col. E.W. Woon, respectively, both ex-Cape Mounted Policemen who are now living in

retirement in East London and who knew Scotty personally:

Come saddle up my horse,

And strap my billy on.

To hell with the Lime Juice Parliament!

We'll fight for Mankaroane.

Now cheer boys cheer and never be afraid.

*We're marching in the ranks of the Stellaland
Brigade.*

And as we march along, we'll sing this song,

And fight for good old Mankaroane.

Soon Scotty had become such a scourge to his enemies that the government of the South-African Republic put a price of £500 on his head.

¹ The Cape Parliament.

Some of the leading Transvaal freebooters, including Groot Adriaan de la Rey, Gey van Pittius and Gert van Niekerk, did their best to earn the reward. All their efforts, however, proved in vain. Scotty often took the most daredevil risks and he had some hairbreadth escapes. But his cool brain and proverbial luck extricated him from the most perilous situations.

On one occasion Groot Adriaan de la Rey, a brother of the famous Boer War general, made a determined effort to lay Scotty by the heels. He organised a commando of farmers from the Western Transvaal area and set out on his trail. It was not long before Scotty discovered what was happening, and although he had no illusions about what his fate would be if he were caught, he decided to play a prank on his enemies. Instead of doing the sensible thing and going to ground until the danger was over, his queer sense of humour induced him to put his head right in the lion's mouth.

Accompanied by a friend he set out and came upon the punitive force near the present village

of Amalia. Riding boldly up to its leader he asked him where he was going.

"We are searching for Scotty Smith," was the reply.

"Oh," Scotty exclaimed. "My friend and I are also looking for the scoundrel. Do you mind if we join forces with you?"

Groot Adriaan was quite agreeable. Scotty thus had the peculiar pleasure of taking part in the futile hunt for himself. For two days they continued the abortive search. Then Scotty told De la Rey that he and his friend were a long way from home. On the following day they would have to begin their return journey. He thanked the commando for allowing him to accompany them on the hunt and then he said, "Every night you've taken it in turn to stand watch, and we've done nothing. As this is our last night we'd like to do our share of guard duty, so that you can all have a good rest."

The men were only too glad to accept this considerate offer. Needless to say when they

awoke at dawn the next day not only had Scotty and his friend disappeared but all their horses had vanished as well.

On another occasion Scotty is reputed to have had a very narrow escape from poisoning. He was riding across the desert early one morning when he came to a camp. A party of four Boers with their wives and families were trekking and had stopped for the night. When Scotty joined them they were already inspanned and ready to move. Unfortunately for him one of the men recognised who he was.

At the first opportunity the Boer whispered the information to his companions. There was a hasty consultation. Scotty's reputation was, however, so well known that the Boers hesitated to attack him. Instead one of them slipped some poison into a beaker of brandy and gave it to him. Scotty was quite unsuspecting and drank it. The poison soon took effect and he collapsed. The Boers made haste to trek, leaving the outlaw for dead.

Hours later he was found by one of his own men. He remained unconscious for a long time, but his constitution stood him in good stead. After a while he recovered. He had had a narrow escape, however, and some of his teeth and most of his hair fell out. As soon as he was fit to travel again he hastened to revenge the attempt on his life.

The Boers were deep in the Kalahari when Scotty and his gang came up with them. A fight took place and all the men were killed. Scotty then put the women and children into a wagon which he sent back to the Transvaal. The other three wagons with their spans of oxen he kept for himself, as compensation for the suffering he had endured.

How often the shadow of death fell across Scotty's path during these adventurous years will never be known. Once many years later, when he was on a long trip in the Kalahari, a trip about which I shall have more to say later, he recounted many of his more exciting adventures

and experiences to his companion, Major C.A. Anderson.

One evening, for example, as they were sitting round the camp fire with their blankets already spread out on the desert sand, Scotty described a narrow escape from death which he had had in those far-off days.

"I had carried out a most successful raid against the Stellaland burghers," he explained, "and had captured a useful bunch of cattle. I took them to Kimberley and sold them at a good price. Now, while I was there, a particularly fine horse which a young fellow was riding, took my fancy. I spent a few days in Kimberley and then decided to return home. It was a very hot afternoon when I set out and I was in no particular hurry. Towards sundown, as I rode slowly along, I heard galloping hoofs and the next moment the young man I had noticed swept past me.

"For some reason this aroused my suspicions and I had a sudden, instinctive feeling that I was

in danger. I at once decided to get off the open road and to ride under cover of the thick bush to a piece of high ground which lay ahead of me.

"I reached my objective without mishap, tied my horse to a tree, and then made my way on foot to reconnoitre the road below. Before I reached it I heard voices. The voices were speaking in the Taal, so I crept cautiously nearer until I could hear what they were saying. And then my worst fears were confirmed. There were three men below and they were obviously lying in ambush, waiting for me to appear.

"I therefore crawled carefully back until I was in a position to see them. Then jumping to my feet and levelling my rifle I shouted, 'Hands Up!'

"One of the men grabbed for his gun and I immediately shot him dead. The other man, and the youth who had passed me on the road, wisely obeyed my order. My first act was to disarm them. Then I mounted the youth's horse and rode back to where my own animal was fastened. I

switched horses and with my new acquisition in tow rode safely back to camp."

But if Scotty bore a charmed life, not all the freebooters were as fortunate. Close to the Transvaal's western border and not far from Massouw's camp at Manthe is a deep ravine, known as Honey's Kloof. It was here that one of the toughest and most reckless of the filibusters, after whom the kloof was subsequently named, met a sudden and violent death.

James Honey, who was fighting for Massouw, had had a bitter quarrel with some of his fellow adventurers over the distribution of booty and the division of land. He considered that he had been unfairly treated and tried to incite Massouw's Koranas to rise against the other filibusters. Even though he did not succeed in his object, this was considered a very serious matter. When his former companions heard what he had done they held a meeting and decided that there was only one punishment for such a treacherous crime. Accordingly a small commando of about

six men set out to find the renegade and revenge themselves on him.

After riding for some time across the Bechuanaland veld they came upon Honey. In spite of being taken by surprise and outnumbered, he resisted strongly. The odds, however, were too great. He was overpowered and trussed up. The commando then remounted and taking their prisoner with them travelled back until they came to a ravine out of which gushed a small spring.

Here the men stopped as it was a hot day and they wanted to rest their horses and quench their thirst. Honey also begged for a drink and so they loosened the riem with which his wrists were tied. As he knelt down and cupped his hands in the water one of his captors raised his gun and shot him in the back of the head. Honey toppled slowly over and fell into the stream, dyeing it red with his blood. The commando then threw his saddle, with his raincoat still strapped to it, down beside the body and rode on.

Some time later a couple of African herd boys found the corpse and reported their discovery to the authorities. The matter was referred to Sir Charles Warren and he ordered an enquiry. As a result the former commander of Massouw's European army, Sarel Petrus Celliers, together with Gert van Niekerk and some others, was arrested and arraigned before the Landdrost of Vryburg, Rudolf Muller, on a charge of murder. It was impossible, however, to find sufficient evidence for a conviction and they were all acquitted. The murderer was never actually discovered, but it was popularly believed that the man who fired the fatal shot was named Erlandt.

The story of this brutal crime does not, however, end there. According to local legend, shortly after the tragedy a strange thing happened. To the amazement of the Africans living around Manthe the eye of the spring began to recede gradually down the kloof until within a year or two it was at least fifty yards away. Year after year this process continued until it finally

came to rest about a mile from the scene of the murder.

There was probably some prosaic, scientific explanation for this phenomenon, but the primitive tribesmen entertained a much more picturesque theory. They swore that the place was haunted by Honey's ghost, and that every year, on the anniversary of the murder, a shot could be plainly heard in the vicinity. Nor would the most tempting bribe induce them to go anywhere near the spot after dark.

"The spirit that inhabited the spring," they told their children, "was very angry because the blood of the white man had defiled his waters. So he went to live in another place."

CHAPTER FOUR

STELLALAND AND GOSHEN

By means of diversionary raids and harassing tactics Scotty managed to hold Mankaroane's enemies at bay for some months. The chief's position was also strengthened about this time by the death of his Batlapin rival, Gasibone. The

latter had been causing the Transvaal Government so much trouble that at last a strong commando was fitted out and a desperate attempt made to capture his stronghold. The expedition was a failure, but for a few rolls of tobacco a Bushman murdered the chief, cut off his head and presented it to the Boer leaders as proof that he had fulfilled his mission. The resistance of Gasibone's tribe then collapsed.

This rid Mankaroane of one of his most inveterate enemies. Massouw's freebooters were, however, too numerous and too strong for Scotty to check indefinitely. Finally, in July 1882 a negotiated peace was arranged by "one-armed" Melville on behalf of the authorities in Pretoria under which a large part of Mankaroane's lands were taken away from him and were used to establish the Stellaland Republic. This was formally proclaimed by Gert van Niekerk with Vryburg as its capital, and in 1883 amid the jubilation of the freebooters its historic flag, a white star on a green background, was ceremoniously hoisted.

Stellaland was now nominally an independent State over which the Transvaal exercised a kind of vague and ill-defined suzerainty. But in reality it was a republic run by the freebooters, who were thus able to indulge in their illegal activities practically without any interference from the authorities. Unfortunately for them, however, this state of affairs did not last long. Rhodes' worst forebodings appeared to be coming true. The two freebooter republics straddled right across the Missionaries' Road. If, as seemed likely, they were incorporated in the Transvaal, the Cape Colony's vital link with the interior would be finally severed. Both the Cape and the British Governments were seriously alarmed, especially as a new menace now loomed on the horizon. This was the growing threat of German expansion eastwards from its recently proclaimed protectorate of South West Africa.

So imminent was the danger that Rhodes, who had hitherto been extremely suspicious of the Imperial Government's intentions in this area, because they clashed with his own personal

ambitions for the Cape, now strongly urged Her Majesty's Government to annex Bechuanaland to forestall the sinister designs of both the Germans and the Transvalers.

At this critical stage the Stellalanders themselves brought matters to a head. They arranged for the union of the two freebooter states as a preliminary step towards their absorption into the South-African Republic. The majority of these men were Boers and so definitely pro-Transvaal. But many of the English filibusters also favoured this step as they realised that there would be much more scope for their activities if they came under the weak, unsettled rule of Pretoria, rather than the fairly stable government of the Cape. In justice to Scotty it must be stated that he did not subscribe to this view. On the contrary he remained a fervent loyalist to the end of his life.

In the meantime lawlessness and crime had reached such a pitch on the Transvaal's western border that by mutual agreement a British and a Transvaal commissioner were appointed to co-

operate in the maintenance of peace and order on both sides of the frontier. The man selected by the colonial secretary as the British nominee was the Reverend John Mackensie, one of those zealous, political missionaries who did so much to inflame English-Afrikaner relations in South-Africa during the nineteenth century. He was impulsive, prejudiced, self-opinionated, tactless, and took little trouble to hide his violently anti-Boer feelings.

The new commissioner arrived at Vryburg in July 1884 and instead of carrying out the work for which he had been appointed he immediately took strong political action. On his own authority he accepted Montsioa as a British subject, declared a protectorate over the new republic, pulled down its one-star flag and hoisted the Union Jack in its place.

Most of the freebooters were furious and wanted to resist the proclamation by force of arms. They even threatened to throw Mackensie bodily out of Stellaland. This would not have proved a very difficult feat, because the only

police detachment he had available to maintain law and order in this vast area consisted of a Major Lowe and two or three constables.

At this critical juncture, when the fate of the new protectorate lay in the balance, Scotty Smith undoubtedly saved the situation. He announced that he was prepared to accept British rule, and forthwith disbanded his private army. Some of his own men were bitterly opposed to his action. Turning against their leader they openly accused him of cowardice and for a time it looked as though blood would flow. But Scotty kept his head. Realising that British control of the country was bound to come, he decided that it would be futile to run his head against a stone wall, and so he submitted to the inevitable.

Scotty, who in his time played many parts, now assumed an unusual role, that of a reformed character. He regularly attended the open-air meetings which Mackensie held in the courtyard at Vryburg to explain his policy, and he even put in an appearance at the minister's Sunday evening services. There he would sit quietly at

the back of the congregation until the service was over. Then he would be among the first to slip out. The commissioner, who had not yet made his acquaintance, often wondered who this serious-looking, well-behaved worshipper was, and so one day he asked someone to identify him.

"Don't you know?" was the surprised reply. "That's the famous Scotty Smith."

Now just about this time considerable activity was taking place in the Rooi Grond, the turbulent Transvaal area just across the border from Goshen. Here large numbers of freebooters, known as the Rooi Grond volunteers, were gathering, obviously with the intention of making another attack on the unfortunate Montsioa.

Meanwhile news of what was happening had reached the Cape Government and instructions had been sent to Mackensie to report on the matter. He was therefore anxious to obtain the services of a reliable man whom he could send to

the troubled area to make the necessary on-the-spot investigations. While instituting discreet enquiries, with this object in view, he was informed by several people that Scotty was the ideal choice for the job, as he was "the one person who could go anywhere unnoticed and whose presence or disappearance never seemed to create any surprise."

On hearing this he sent for Scotty, and on a bright moonlight night a strange meeting took place -a meeting between the representative of Her Majesty the Queen and the notorious cattle-lifter and filibuster.

Scotty, who was very sensitive to atmosphere, soon appreciated the fact that his bad reputation had preceded him and that Mackensie was not at all certain whether he could trust him. Now Scotty was one of those men who take an instant liking for, or dislike to, people. In this particular instance he approved of the commissioner and so went out of his way to make a favourable impression on him. In fact he turned on the charm so successfully that the Rev. Mackensie

was completely won over and decided to take Scotty into his confidence.

"I want you to go to the Rooi Grond," he explained, "and find out exactly what's going on there."

He made a point of stressing the danger involved and of warning the outlaw that he would be taking his life in his hands. Perhaps he instinctively realised that nothing else he might say could possibly prejudice Scotty more in favour of the scheme. With a smile the latter readily agreed to the commissioner's proposal.

"You'll have heard a great deal against me," he remarked. "I'm not defending myself, but one thing I will say, you've never heard that I've broken my word, or distressed poor people."

"Well, George Lennox," Mackensie answered, "I hear what you say and I know what you mean. If in my heart I had thought hopelessly of you or very distrustfully, I should not be standing here. It's quite true that I've heard what is being said about you, while I believe you have

been at all my meetings in the courtyard and know exactly what my object is in the country. Now speak honestly and steadily the word which you will uphold. Will you willingly help me if I can show you how you can do it?"

"Yes, I'm willing to help you, sir," Scotty replied, without any hesitation.

"But suppose," Mackensie repeated, "I wanted you to do what was difficult, even dangerous, keeping always in mind the objects which you know me to have in the country. Would you still feel inclined to assist me?"

"I'm quite willing to take orders from you," the outlaw declared in a firm voice; "and as to anything dangerous, I will risk my life for you. Don't distrust me. I say it and I mean it."

"There was an unexpectedly strong expression of friendly feeling from such a quarter," Mackensie subsequently wrote when describing this interview. "And I felt certain it was genuine. I'd been told at Vryburg in May that I'd been shaking hands with some queer people. I now

gave my hand to one of the queerest, a man, however, who I felt at the time took it in good faith and certainly did not break his word to me. Scotty actually undertook what he had promised to do."

Shortly after this Scotty disappeared from his usual haunts in Taungs, and slipping unobtrusively across the frontier made his way to the Rooi Grond. There, taking his life in his hands, he went about his work, unrecognised and unmolested by the freebooters, who would have given a great deal to have laid their hands on him. Then just as silently as he had come he vanished, re-crossed the border, and one day reappeared in Vryburg. He reported to the commissioner and, after giving him a full, comprehensive account of his discoveries, quietly resumed his normal life.

Mackensie was highly delighted with his agent's report and formed so high an opinion of his capabilities that he decided to appoint him a sub-inspector of Native police. Scotty, who had a keen sense of humour, must have appreciated the

irony of the proposed appointment, which would have made him an official upholder of the law he had so often flouted. But unfortunately it was not to be. Political events in the border areas were moving quickly to a climax.

The Rev. John Mackenzie's action in overthrowing the Stellaland Republic had caused tremendous resentment in the Transvaal. In addition his arbitrary and unauthorised conduct had taken the British Government completely by surprise. It strongly disapproved of what he had done and decided on a complete reversal of his policy. The commissioner was therefore rapped over the knuckles, ordered to lower the Union Jack, and instructed to restore the status quo: Finally he was recalled and replaced by no less a person than Cecil Rhodes.

Before taking up his appointment, the new commissioner was preceded by the Imperial Secretary, Capt. Graham Bower, who was told to have preliminary talks with the Boer leaders in order to arrange a peaceful settlement of the whole matter. Bower met Lang Jan de la Rey

and Gert van Niekerk on the banks of the Harts River and handed over to them, as a gesture of friendship, the Stellaland flag, which he had brought from the Cape with him. Once again the Union Jack was hauled down and the freebooter ensign hoisted in its place.

In spite of this the Imperial secretary had a somewhat mixed reception. Feelings were running high and on one occasion he was surrounded by a number of Boers who threatened to shoot him. Most of the filibusters, however, treated him with respect and some of them even expressed feelings of goodwill towards the Queen and a desire to remain British subjects.

In a further attempt at reconciliation Bower played what he thought was a trump card. He ordered the arrest of the Boers' arch-enemy in the field, Scotty Smith. The latter was sitting in his favourite resting place on the bar counter of Loo Abrams' store in Taungs when the officers of the law arrived.

Although he could easily have resisted, as he was surrounded by his friends, he did not do so but went quietly. Some of his gang were, however, furious and wanted to make a fight of it. In fact it was only with the greatest difficulty that they were restrained from attacking the police. The charges against the accused were that he had shot and killed a Boer and that he had taken part in a raid on Massouw's cattle.

Scotty himself made no attempt to deny these accusations, but simply alleged that the Boer had fired first and that he had acted in self-defence. As for the raid, Major Tylden has aptly pointed out that, "If half the reports are true the bulk of the Stellalanders and Goshenites could have been arrested on similar charges."

After his detention Scotty was lodged in the Kimberley jail but was soon released as there was no reliable evidence to support the allegations made against him. In this way the old rogue, who had so often escaped the just imprisonment which he richly deserved, was now considered by his followers to have been

unfairly persecuted by the law and wore for a time, with a good deal of unction, a martyr's halo round his unrepentant head.

On another occasion Scotty is reputed to have been arrested on a double-murder charge. A farmer and his son had sworn to kill him. They got on to his trail and for days tracked him down. Eventually they caught up with him at Boetsap. But Scotty had become suspicious and he was prepared for them. A fight took place and he shot both the men. He was apprehended by the Griqualand West authorities and taken to Kimberley for trial. When the police, however, returned to the scene of the tragedy they found that the bodies had vanished. As soon as their backs were turned, some of Scotty's gang had spirited the corpses away. With this material evidence missing the proceedings were summarily dropped.

In the meantime Rhodes had arrived at Vryburg and from there had proceeded to Niekerksrest on the Harts River, where he had his historic meeting with De la Rey, Van

Niekerk and the other Stellaland leaders. When he rode into their encampment early one morning he found them in an ugly mood. He greeted De la Rey and then suggested the desirability of coming to a peaceful agreement. The latter, however, was looking for trouble.

"Blood must flow," he growled. "Blood must flow."

But Rhodes was equal to the occasion. "Nonsense," he retorted. "I'm hungry. Give me my breakfast first and then we'll talk about blood."

This appeal to the traditional Boer hospitality had the desired effect. The ice was broken and they sat down to a meal together. Over coffee the Boer leaders' aggressiveness and suspicions gradually fell away. Soon they were on the friendliest of terms and Rhodes actually stayed in the camp for a week and became godfather to De la Rey's grandchild. After this there was no further difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory settlement. Rhodes guaranteed the freebooters

possession of their farms and cattle, and in return they agreed to accept British rule.

And so for a time an uneasy peace settled over Stellaland. Further north in Goshen, however, the sporadic fighting continued unabated. There Montsioa was again getting the worst of matters. Eventually he was forced to surrender practically all his lands to the freebooters. Gey van Pittius took charge and declared the country Transvaal territory, while S.J. du Toit triumphantly hoisted the Vierkleur, on the very same day Paul Kruger boldly annexed Goshen to the South-African Republic.

Immediately the fat was in the fire. There was a tremendous outcry at the Cape and the Prime Minister, Cecil Rhodes, asked for British intervention in this area.

At the time Scotty happened to be on the diamond fields on a private matter of his own. When he heard that a mass meeting was to be held that night in the old Kimberley town hall to support Rhodes' action he decided to be present.

Although his knowledge of the country was more extensive than that of most people, he was somewhat confused about the political implications of the recent events which had taken place there. In this he was not alone, as no one seemed at all certain whether the two republics really came under the British or the Transvaal sphere of influence.

Scotty was anxious to get the position quite clear in his own mind so that he would know what action to take in the future. He therefore called on his friend, Mr George Beet, a well-known Kimberley business man, pioneer and prospector, for whose judgment he had the greatest respect. They discussed the matter fully and then Beet summed up the position as it appeared to him:

"I jocularly declared the country to belong to any grabber who was powerful and cute enough to hold it against all-comers."

Scotty heartily approved of these sentiments, and as an indication of how his mind was

working immediately announced, "I vote British." He attended the meeting and showed that in addition to his other talents he could be quite an orator when the occasion warranted it. In an eloquent speech he stressed the urgent need for intervention and urged that a strong force of British troops should be dispatched without delay to bring the freebooters to their senses. Similar speeches were made by other members of the audience and a petition was drawn up on these lines and sent to the Cape.

Shortly afterwards, amid a fervent wave of patriotism, Sir Charles Warren set out from the Cape with a large expeditionary force for Bechuanaland. Although there was no fighting on the way, his arrival in Vryburg early in 1885 was greeted with tremendous excitement by those well disposed to British rule, and he was treated as a conquering hero. The majority were not, however, so easily satisfied with the way events were shaping and Warren, realising this, decided not to take any chances. He therefore proclaimed martial law, forbade the citizens to

be out in the streets after 9 p.m., and prohibited the discharge of firearms.

A few nights later an event took place which threw the whole camp into confusion. The officers were being entertained to a dance by the ladies of Vryburg while the men were enjoying themselves in various other ways. Suddenly a number of shots rang out. Instantly there was pandemonium in the town and the rumour quickly spread that the enemy were making a surprise attack on it. The general alarm was sounded, the officers hastily left the dance; and the men stood to arms.

It now became apparent that the firing was proceeding from a store which belonged to a young German merchant named Harry Schuch. A squad of soldiers was ordered to capture the building. Stealthily surrounding the premises they stormed forward and broke open the door. To their amazement they found that the sole occupant was the owner, and the reason for the shooting soon became apparent. It happened to be the Kaiser's birthday and the lonely young

immigrant was celebrating this happy event by drinking toasts to His Imperial Majesty and by discharging blanks in his honour. Harry Schuch strongly resented the soldiers' untimely interruption of his festivities. He strenuously resisted arrest. He was overpowered and, cursing wildly, was dragged outside, lashed to a wagon wheel, and left there for the night under guard to cool off.

The next morning he was brought before a senior officer. When, however, he explained that he had been unaware of the proclamation and some of his fellow citizens spoke up on his behalf and gave him a good character he was released without any additional punishment. But this comic opera interlude was perhaps the nearest which any of the men of the expeditionary force ever got to a real fight during the whole of the campaign.

The Transvaal Government's reaction to the arrival of Sir Charles Warren's force was immediate and dramatic. President Kruger in alarm withdrew his annexation proclamation and

Du Toit was forced to haul down the Transvaal flag. The southern part of Bechuanaland, in which Goshen and Stellaland were incorporated, became a Crown Colony while the northern section was proclaimed a British protectorate.

In this way the short-lived, inglorious rule of the freebooters came to a sudden and unspectacular end. A few of them remained to become respectable citizens in their old age. But the majority, infuriated at no longer being able to carry out their nefarious practices under the cloak of patriotism, drifted off to more unsettled parts of the country. Most of these men eventually sought sanctuary in the Transvaal and the little town of Christiana on the Vaal was particularly unfortunate in this respect. In fact ex-Stellalanders flocked there in such numbers and gave the place so bad a name that even when its more respectable citizens visited the diamond diggings they immediately came under police surveillance as possible I.D.B. suspects.

The original inhabitants of Christiana naturally resented this ungodly intrusion into

their midst. A meeting was held in November 1885, at the President Hotel, to consider a proposal for the forcible ejection of the newcomers. But when it was realised that this would result in a shooting match the suggestion was abandoned and the proceedings broke up in disorder. The freebooters continued to flourish at the expense of the more law-abiding citizens and it was many years before the Republican Government was strong enough to take any effective action against them.

Meanwhile in the north Massouw was still making a nuisance of himself. Eventually his sporadic but persistent raids on the farmers' herds and cattle forced the Transvaal authorities to take action. A punitive force of nearly a thousand men was raised and the Commandant-General himself, Piet Joubert, assumed command. Now Joubert was notoriously cautious and was always anxious to avoid bloodshed if possible. When he reached Mamusa he therefore decided to open negotiations with the recalcitrant chief.

There was very little discipline in the Boer camp, however, and some of the younger men were thirsting for a fight. Led by one of the more impetuous young commandants, P.A. Cronje, they climbed the hill to Massouw's fort and demanded his immediate surrender. A heated argument ensued... Suddenly a shot rang out, the battle was joined, and a bloody fray took place. The fierceness of the fighting in this petty engagement can be gauged from the fact that within a few minutes ten white men had lost their lives.

At the Battle of Mamusa, Massouw suffered an annihilating defeat. The chief himself and most of his councillors were killed. In addition about one hundred and fifty of his followers received fatal wounds and another hundred sustained less serious injuries. An extremely unfortunate aspect of the affair was that a large number of women and children, who were caught between two fires in the general mix-up, were included among the dead and wounded.

In this way Massouw's Korana tribe was completely broken up. Less than a hundred escaped unscathed and they were dispersed among the surrounding tribes and soon lost their identity. To-day the sole reminder of this sanguinary little affray is the town of Schweizer Reneke which was built near Mamusa and whose name commemorates two of the Transvalers who lost their lives in the battle, Captain C.A. Schweizer and Veldcornet G. N. Reneke.

As for Scotty, the change of government in the Stellaland-Goshen Republics made very little difference to his mode of life. He remained a law unto himself. No one could prevent him from going his own way and doing exactly what he liked.

CHAPTER FIVE

GUN-RUNNER AND I.D.B. MERCHANT

The decade 1880-1890, which embraced the establishment and overthrow of the two freebooter republics of Stellaland and Goshen,

provided Scotty Smith with a unique opportunity for displaying his own peculiar talents.

During the intervals in the intermittent fighting in which his position as Mankaroane's ally involved him, Scotty found plenty of time to raid his neighbours' farms, and in this way he built up an unrivalled reputation as South-Africa's most dreaded horse and cattle thief. The slightest rumour that he was operating in their neighbourhood was enough to send cold shivers down the farmers' backs. Some of them would then hastily hide their best stock and finest horses in the most inaccessible ravines on their farms. Others would double the African watchmen at their stables, and when these precautions proved unavailing they themselves would often take their turn, standing on guard all night, with fully loaded rifles, waiting for the raider and his men.

Shortly after Warren's Expedition, Scotty bought a farm and a store at Kheis on the Orange River. But this was merely a blind to cover up his cattle-stealing activities, as he did very little,

if any, actual farming. Situated as it was on the fringe of the Kalahari Desert and in close proximity to the Bechuanaland and Cape Colony borders his ranch was an ideal base for his stock-raiding operations. Here he could safely hide the cattle he had purloined and have them re-branded and prepared for the Upington, Taungs and Vryburg markets.

Another of these hide-outs which Scotty had acquired was near the little village of Amalia, about twenty miles from Schweizer Reneke. This place is still called Diewedraai, because it was here on the banks of the Harts River that he used to graze and fatten his stolen stock.

This routine work, however, he usually left to his men. He himself continued to spend most of his time in Taungs, which he used as his headquarters for indulging in every type of illegal but highly lucrative activity which took his fancy. In this respect Scotty had catholic tastes and during these years his activities ranged from I.D.B. to diamond stealing, from highway robbery to gun-running, and from fraud to confidence trickery.

One of his earliest and most profitable exploits about this time was his successful gun-running expedition into Basutoland. In 1871 this state had been annexed to the Cape. But its proud people had never really been conquered and many of the tribesmen still possessed their own guns. In 1880, when the Cape Government tried to disarm them, they rose in rebellion. After three years of fighting and an expenditure of £4,500,000 the Basutos were finally defeated, and although they were allowed to retain their weapons a strict embargo on future importations was imposed. Inevitably it became every Basuto's ambition to possess an illicit firearm and he was prepared to pay a high price for the privilege.

When Scotty heard of this he realised its possibilities from a money-making point of view and he decided to take a hand in the game. Having secured a large number of Snider rifles, muzzle-loaders, and soft-nosed bullets, besides a quantity of powder and shot, he loaded these on to wagons and trekked across the Free State until

he reached Ficksburg, close to the Basutoland border. Near this place there was a police post under a veldcornet and half a dozen men. Scotty stopped his wagons a short distance from the post and hid them behind bushes close to the road. Then he rode boldly up to the frontier. He was cordially greeted by the commander of the post and invited to have a cup of coffee. After a while, as they were sitting talking, Scotty lowered his voice and said in a confidential tone:

"Look, Meneer, I've got some important information for you. I know a lot of gunrunning's taking place. Well, I've found out that Scotty Smith's one of the chief culprits, and what's more, I'll show you how he does it."

The veldcornet was immediately all attention.

"I wish I could catch the rogue," he muttered. "It'd be a big feather in my cap."

"As a matter of fact," his informant went on, "I've had a tip that Scotty's just run a cargo of guns into Basutoland and I know they've not been taken away yet. He's hidden them in a drift

on the Caledon River, and the Basutos are coming to fetch them to-night."

The officer became very excited.

"Can you show me the place?" he asked.

"Yes," Scotty replied.

"How far's it from here?"

"About fifteen miles south I should say. I don't know whether Scotty'll still be there of course, but he may be keeping watch, and as you know he's a pretty desperate fellow, so you'd better take a strong party with you."

The veldcornet was greatly impressed by the charm and plausibility of the genial stranger, and not for a moment did he doubt the truth of what he was being told. The Free State was having a great deal of trouble with gun-runners. They were very elusive and difficult to catch. If he could pull off this coup and capture the notorious outlaw as well, it would certainly redound greatly to his credit.

He had, however, heard all about Scotty and his terrible reputation and so he decided to take no chances. He therefore ordered all his men to mount, and leaving the post to its own devices rode south with his guide. After a couple of hours' hard riding over rough country they came in sight of the drift and Scotty held up his hand for them to stop. He and the veldcornet then dismounted and carefully reconnoitred the position. Finding no one in sight the police officer returned to his men and ordered them to picket their horses. Then they followed Scotty on foot to a bend in the river where there was a wide pool of water next to the drift.

"There," he cried, pointing dramatically to the Basutoland side of the river. "That's where they're hidden."

"But surely," the officer remonstrated, "the powder'll be spoilt if he put it in there."

"Don't worry," was the reply. "Scotty's a sly old bird and he'd take good care to make the boxes watertight first."

"Well, let's have a look anyway," said the veldcornet and at a sign from him a couple of his men waded in and began probing about in the water. Suddenly one of them let out a yell.

"There's something here all right," he shouted. "Feels like a box."

"And here's another," the second man exclaimed. "Bring one of them out," the officer ordered.

The two men concentrated on a particular box, but in spite of their combined efforts they were unable to move it.

"It's terribly heavy," they panted.

"Of course," Scotty scoffed. "What d'ye expect? You know what guns weigh."

Two or three more men now went to the assistance of their companions and together they slowly and laboriously dragged the box out of the water and up the bank.

While they were preoccupied with this, Scotty wandered casually away until he had reached the

bend in the river. Rounding this he ran swiftly towards the picketed horses, set them loose and stampeded them. Then mounting his own steed he galloped back as fast as he could to where he had left his wagons. His boys quickly inspanned. They drove the wagons safely past the deserted post to the rendezvous deep in Basutoland where his customers were waiting for him.

In the meantime the veldcornet's men had managed to prize open the lid of the box, only to find that it was packed with river boulders. They turned to vent their anger on the plausible stranger but he had vanished. And now for the first time they realised how they had been duped. Nor was their anger lessened when they discovered that their horses had disappeared and that they had a long and tiring walk ahead of them.

Scotty next tried his hand at tobacco smuggling. In those days tobacco was already being grown on a fairly extensive scale in the Rustenburg district of the Transvaal. Although it was produced and sold extremely cheaply, the

Republican Government, in its search for revenue, imposed very heavy taxes on its export. This naturally encouraged Scotty and other men of his type to smuggle tobacco into the Free State and the Cape, where it fetched high prices.

On one occasion he and some of his confederates loaded a number of horse wagons with tobacco and set out for the Colony. Everything went well until they reached the border near Christiana. But here they were stopped by a detachment of the Transvaal police, the famous Z.A.R.P.S. The wagons were searched and the contraband cargo was discovered. It was promptly confiscated, packed into one of the wagons and transported to the guard post at the drift across the Vaal. Then, as a precautionary measure, Scotty and his friends were separated and shut up in different huts.

In the middle of the night Scotty broke out of his primitive jail and released his fellow smugglers. They noiselessly inspanned the horses to the wagon containing the tobacco and, slipping past the sleeping sentry, crossed safely

into the Free State. From there it was merely a routine matter to transport their load to the Colony, where they had no difficulty in disposing of it at a good profit.

Scotty always kept his eyes open and one day at a horse sale on the Kimberley market square he noticed something which immediately aroused his suspicions. A couple of Jewish merchants were bidding on a very poor, badly conditioned horse. Now Scotty knew that these men were more concerned with I.D.B. than with horseflesh, and he wondered why they were taking so much interest in such an unprepossessing nag. He decided to find out and so, when it was led away by a Hottentot boy, he unobtrusively followed.

He noted where the horse was stabled and that night he took up his post under a tree from where he could keep it under observation. Soon after dark he noticed that a number of lanterns had been lit and that there was a great deal of activity going on inside the stable. Creeping cautiously forward he reached a window and peered inside.

To his amazement he saw that the two merchants were forcing what looked like lumps of dough down the unwilling horse's throat. For a moment he was puzzled and then a slow smile flitted across his face as he realised that they had discovered a new and ingenious way of smuggling stolen diamonds across the frontier.

Scotty discreetly retired, got his horse, and when some time later the Hottentot rode out on the doctored nag he followed at a safe distance. As soon as they had crossed into the Free State, Scotty rode up, commandeered the Hottentot's mount and sent its rider packing. Then he rode off until he had reached a secluded spot among some trees. Here he dismounted and shot the unfortunate horse. He cut it open and, as he had guessed, found a number of diamonds in its stomach.

Like most of his frontier contemporaries during the 'eighties and 'nineties of last century, Scotty was fascinated by the lure of gold and diamonds. There is plenty of evidence that, off and on, he spent a good deal of time on pros-

pecting trips which took him to remote parts of the Transvaal and deep into the Bechuanaland Protectorate. With the optimism of the inveterate gambler he never abandoned the hope that one day he would strike it lucky, and although he was singularly unfortunate in this respect he still believed, right up to the day of his death, that the burning sands of the Kalahari Desert hid a veritable treasure house of precious stones.

There is no doubt, too, that apart from these legitimate attempts to get rich quickly, Scotty also indulged in that most lucrative, exciting and risky of all illegal pastimes, I.D.B. So tempting were the rewards of success in this dangerous profession that in Hopetown, Boshof, Christiana, Taungs, Vryburg and other towns within a hundred-mile radius of Kimberley there were groups of men whose sole means of subsistence was associated with the stealing or illicit buying and selling of these valuable gems. And many otherwise highly respectable citizens, who in the ordinary way would never have misappropriated a penny, succumbed to the lure of the shining

stones, and subsequently paid for their folly by expiating their sins on the Cape Town breakwater.

So severe, indeed, were the penalties for failure² and so common were the traps set by the police, that anyone who wished to avoid a similar fate did well to keep his own counsel. Scotty, highly secretive by nature, was certainly the last man in the world to speak out of turn. As a result we know all too little about his diamond-dealing activities, apart from a few anecdotes which have been handed down to posterity.

Here, for example, is an account of how Scotty's quick thinking once saved a friend of his from arrest and imprisonment. One day he was walking casually down a street in Kimberley when he saw a man hurrying towards him with two other men, obviously plain-clothed detectives, hot on his trail.

² The usual sentence was seven years hard labour.

"I at once realised," Scotty used subsequently to recall, "that he had some diamonds in his possession. I therefore held out my hand as though I was trying to grab him. He immediately got the idea, and as he brushed past he neatly transferred a small packet to me. He then continued his hurried flight, while I", Scotty always used to chuckle at this stage, "had the satisfaction of walking past the minions of the law with the diamonds tightly clasped in my hand."

Another story told to me by a real old-timer concerns Scotty's famous encounter with a notorious Jewish diamond thief. Scotty was riding transport at the time and happened to be taking a load of goods from Kimberley to Winburg. He had only just left the outskirts of the town when he noticed a peddler walking in the road ahead and offered him a lift. The peddler hesitated for a moment and then climbed on to the wagon. As they continued their journey Scotty noticed that his passenger appeared to be very nervous. He kept glancing over his shoulder

and showing other signs of anxiety. At last this got on Scotty's nerves.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Is something troubling you?"

"No, no," cried the Jew. "It's nothing. It's nothing." But he continued to look behind him. They were nearing the border when the peddler suddenly let out a shout of dismay.

"The police!" he yelled. "The police! They're after me."

Scotty turned his head and in the distance he saw a small posse of men galloping hard in their direction.

"Hide me. Hide me," pleaded his panic-stricken passenger.

He flung himself flat on the bed of the wagon and Scotty quickly threw a sail over him and piled some boxes and packages on top, completely concealing him from view. When the police rode up, their leader immediately asked Scotty whether he had passed a man on the road.

"Yes," Scotty replied. "I saw a peddler some way back if that's the fellow you're after. Was he a small man dressed in a dirty corduroy suit and wearing a slouch hat?"

"That's him," cried the police sergeant. "That's our man all right."

"What's he done?" Scotty asked.

"Stealing diamonds," was the terse reply. "He's got quite a packet on him."

"Well," Scotty continued calmly, although his heart was beating a little faster, "if you want to catch him you'll have to retrace your steps. As soon as he saw me coming he branched off into the veld. Seemed to be in a bit of a hurry, too."

"Whereabouts was this?" the sergeant asked eagerly.

"You know," Scotty told him, "about three miles back there's an ironstone koppie with a small dried-up vlei next to it." The policeman nodded. "That's where I saw him turn off."

"Thanks," the sergeant shouted, "we'll get him all right. Good-bye," and with a wave of his hand he put spurs to his horse and, accompanied by his men, thundered back the way he had come.

"So," mused Scotty to himself. "This's very interesting. Diamonds! There should be something in it for me."

At that moment he stuck his hand in his pocket and felt a hard package, which had certainly not been there before. A slow grin spread over his face as he realised what it was. Stooping down he whispered to the Jew, "I've put the police off the scent for the time being but you'd better lie hidden until we cross the border in case they return."

Then Scotty carefully opened the parcel. He had not been mistaken. Inside it were a number of fairly large diamonds. He did the package up again and slipped it into one of the wagon boxes. About an hour later they crossed into the Free State.

"It's all right, now," Scotty called out. "You can come out.

The Jew climbed stiffly from his hiding place and stretched his limbs.

"Please give me my packet back," he said. "I slipped it into your pocket when I thought the police might search me.

"What packet?" Scotty innocently asked. "I don't know anything about a packet. You must be making a mistake. Look for yourself if you like."

With growing dismay the peddler ran his hands over Scotty's person but found nothing and, in spite of his protestations, the latter denied all knowledge of the stones.

This did not however, deter the thief from alternately wailing, and moaning, and threatening. At last Scotty could stand his lamentations no longer. Grabbing him by the shoulder he shouted: "I've had enough of this nonsense. I hid you from the police and this's all the thanks I get. You accuse me of being a thief. Clear out or I'll

put a bullet through you, as sure as my name's Scotty Smith."

A look of horror appeared on the peddler's face as he realised for the first time to whom he had entrusted his precious diamonds. Then without another word he jumped off the wagon and scuttled away across the veld.

Still another interesting incident in Scotty Smith's career as a diamond thief was recorded in a letter published in the Sunday Times in 1941, from a man who signed himself "Early Pioneer".

"One of his specialities," he wrote, "was what he termed easing those parties who had become possessed of diamonds in an illegal manner. He described to me on one occasion how he had 'stuck up' a get-rich-quick individual whom he had been told was in possession of a parcel. This party was on his way from Kimberley to the Free State when Scotty held him up by dropping one of his leaders in a four-in-hand.

"Scotty proceeded to search for the parcel, but failed to find it, and the man kept on protesting that he had been misinformed. At last Scotty was on the point of giving up the search when his Hottentot 'achter-ryer' said, 'Baas, take off the cups of the cartwheels and see if the klips are not to be found there'. They did so, and sure enough the parcel was there."

But Scotty was not always so fortunate. Diamonds are easy things to conceal and on at least two occasions he let a small fortune slip through his fingers. At one time he had a house in Taungs, which was really nothing more than a one-roomed shack.

"I was never in such a white man's house as that of Scotty," a sophisticated African once naïvely informed the Rev. John Mackensie. "I saw nothing for sale. I saw no tools or any articles which they were making as tradesmen. I could see only guns and riding accoutrements."

While living at Taungs, Scotty often put up casual travellers whom he had met at Loo

Abrams' and whom he invited to his house for the sake of their company. One of the men he entertained in this way was an Irishman from Belfast who told him that he had been employed on the diamond diggings but that he had had enough of Kimberley and was clearing out for good.

After spending a couple of nights with Scotty the man left for Christiana. A few days afterwards Scotty also happened to go to that town. There he learnt who his guest really was. The Irishman was an ex-detective. He had been sent after a Jew who had cleared out with £10,000 worth of stolen diamonds. He had been successful in apprehending the thief, had searched him and had found the gems. Then the temptation had been too great. He had released his prisoner, pocketed the stones himself and had disposed of them in Christiana.

So brisk was the trade in stolen diamonds at this time that some of the bigger men in the game employed European runners to take their loot across the border into the Free State, the

Transvaal or the Cape. These runners usually travelled on foot, so as not to excite police suspicion.

One day when Scotty was staying in Bethlehem a ragged, footsore Englishman arrived and shared his bedroom at the hotel. Only afterwards, when it was too late, did Scotty discover that the man was a runner and that he had been carrying a large parcel of stones on his person.

Apparently Scotty himself sometimes acted as a runner, if it were made worth his while. In the following story, related to me by Mr G. Bergh of Kimberley, he was commissioned by a well-known firm of diamond merchants to take a parcel of illegal stones to Port Elizabeth. He set out from Kimberley on horseback, but before long some sixth sense warned him that he was being trailed by the police. He therefore changed direction and made for the Free State border, which was only a few miles away.

Realising what he was up to, his pursuers tried to cut him off before he could reach the

frontier. But, putting spurs to his celebrated horse, Cricket, which was famous alike for its fleetness of foot, its stamina and its intelligence, he soon left them far behind and crossed safely into the Free State. The baffled Griqualand West police had to turn back, and with a feeling of relief Scotty was able to continue his journey in more leisurely fashion. Had he only known it, however, his troubles were by no means over.

At the time Mr Bergh's grandfather, Mr G.J.V. Bergh, was the Resident Magistrate of Colesberg. As soon as he heard that Scotty was wanted by the police and was making for the Colony he came to the conclusion that he would probably try to cross the Orange River at the bridge leading to Colesberg. Accompanied by a couple of constables he therefore lay in wait for him on the Cape side of the river.

Eventually a lone horseman appeared. He rode over the bridge, and as he got closer Mr Bergh noticed that his description tallied with that of the wanted man. As soon as he put foot on colonial soil he was seized and searched. The

packet of diamonds was found on him and he was lodged in the local jail.

The authorities in Kimberley were immediately notified of what had happened and further instructions were awaited. These were not long in coming. To Mr Bergh's complete stupefaction a telegram arrived to say that Scotty Smith was to be released immediately and that no further proceedings must be taken against him.

There is no doubt that the outlaw was extremely lucky to get off, but it was a long time before the puzzled magistrate discovered that political expediency had dictated the unusual instructions which he had received. Cecil Rhodes was the Prime Minister of the Cape, and the chief men concerned in this unsavoury affair were not only prominent diamond magnates but also business associates of his. The parliamentary row that would have blown up had Scotty been brought to trial would certainly have done him and his party no good. As a result the matter was hushed up and Scotty was allowed to go free.

This association of Scotty's with Cecil Rhodes is interesting because, as I shall explain later, he had no time for the great empire builder. In spite of this their paths did sometimes cross. There are persistent accounts, for example, of how Scotty once served a term of imprisonment on the breakwater as a result of being caught red-handed with stolen diamonds in his possession, and that he was subsequently released through Rhodes's direct intervention so that he could act as guide to Sir Charles Warren's expedition on its march into Bechuanaland. I do not believe that there is any truth in these stories. On at least one occasion, however, Rhodes does seem to have given the outlaw a commission after his own heart.

On the Free State side of the Griqualand West border there was a place called Freetown, which was a veritable thorn in the side of the De Beers Company. Actually Freetown was nothing more than a collection of straggling shacks perched on the bare veld, but it housed a number of disreputable I.D.B. gangs which quite openly

preyed on the diggings. At last their depredations became so blatant that something had to be done to remove the menace. Rhodes therefore sent for Scotty and engaged him to clean up the settlement.

The latter selected a picked band of desperadoes and one dark night they crossed the frontier and raided the town. So successful were they in smashing up the gangs and dispersing the I.D.B. merchants that they were given a substantial monetary reward by the directors of the De Beers Company.

The Orange River Bridge affair had rather an unusual sequel. A few years later the magistrate's son Mr Oloff Bergh, who was practising law in Vryburg, was drinking sundowners with a friend in a local bar when a tall, bearded man walked in. Oloff's friend, immediately recognised him.

"Come over here, Scotty," he shouted, "I want to introduce you to my friend, Mr Bergh."

Oloff held out his hand, but to his surprise the stranger momentarily hesitated before taking it.

His action was so obviously unfriendly that Oloff asked him point blank what he had against him.

"Is your father, Mr Bergh, the magistrate who was at Colesberg?" Scotty enquired.

"Yes," Oloff replied.

Scotty then told him what had happened and how he had resented his arrest and detention. However, the matter had a happy ending as Oloff Bergh and he became firm friends. According to Mr Bergh, Scotty often obtained large sums of money from his various dubious enterprises. He found it embarrassing to carry this about on his person and so he would deposit it in different banks and post offices under assumed names, and sometimes he would forget to reclaim it. Once he got to know Oloff Bergh well he would frequently entrust his money to him and ask him to keep it for him until things had quietened down and he was able to recover it.

A further incident, in which Scotty is reputed to have played a leading role, concerns a Trans-

vaal farmer who had managed to smuggle a wagon-load of tobacco into Griqualand West. He camped on the Kimberley outspan for the night but unfortunately for him the police had become suspicious. His wagon was searched, the tobacco discovered and he was lodged in jail.

When Scotty, who was on a visit to Kimberley, heard about this he went to see the prisoner.

"If I get you off and save your tobacco," he suggested to the man, "will you give me half the profits?"

The prisoner readily agreed to do this, and so Scotty called on a shopkeeper who had a storeroom full of chaff. He bought the lot, and paid some Africans to bag it for him. His plan was to substitute the chaff for the tobacco, and in order to do this he had to circumvent the two constables who had been left to guard the wagon. He therefore bought a bottle of brandy and that night about eleven o'clock he had a couple of stiff drinks and then drugged the rest of the

liquor. Pretending to be drunk, and waving the bottle in his hand, he weaved his way across the outspan to where the policemen were keeping their watch.

"Wassa way to hotel?" he asked them. "Wassa way?" They showed him and he wandered erratically off. A quarter of an hour later he was back again.

"Wassa way to hotel?" he repeated.

One of the policemen lost his temper. "Stop pestering us, you drunken loafer," he shouted. "Next time I'll have you locked up."

"Orlright, orlright," Scotty muttered, and as he staggered off he dropped the bottle. Apparently quite oblivious of his loss he stumbled in the direction of the hotel, rounded a tree and collapsed to the ground. Immediately he raised his head and was just in time to see one of the policemen pick up the bottle, put it to his lips and take a long drink before passing it to his companion. After giving the drug sufficient time to work Scotty strolled back to the wagon. Both

the constables were dead to the world. Scotty now acted swiftly. Rushing back to the storeroom he roused the Africans who were helping him. They loaded the bags of chaff on a cart, pushed it to the wagon, substituted the chaff for the tobacco and packed the latter in the storeroom.

Well satisfied with his night's work Scotty snatched a few hours' sleep and then attended the court where the Transvaal farmer was being tried. Things were going badly for him when Scotty, who had volunteered to give evidence, went into the witness box.

"Your worship," he remarked. "I think you should inspect the wagon. I examined it on my way here and its contents look like chaff to me, not tobacco."

The court adjourned for an inspection *in loco* and Scotty's information having proved correct, the magistrate dismissed the case and the accused was set free.

After a while the police began to take more and more interest in Scotty's diamond-dealing activities, and many attempts were made to trap him. But the old reprobate was very careful and much too wily to be easily caught. He did, however, have some fairly narrow escapes.

One evening, for example, a Coloured man turned up at his house and signed to him to come outside. After looking furtively around he opened a packet and showed Scotty its contents - a number of small diamonds. The latter was immediately suspicious. But although he was certain that his visitor was a trap he decided to play a trick on him. He therefore pretended to examine the stones very carefully. Then shaking his head he exclaimed, "No, take these away. They're much too small. I'm not interested in them."

The Coloured man left, but next day he was back again, this time with a single, fairly large gem. When he saw it Scotty's eyes lit up with excitement.

"Ha! " he exclaimed, "that's more like it."

He weighed the diamond, measured it, and then for a long time stood looking at it intently and memorising its exact shape. At last he told the man, "I haven't got the money now, but if you come back next Friday I'll buy it."

After he had gone, Scotty went inside and, taking a piece of alum, carved it into the exact shape of the diamond. He had been careful to choose a night for the final meeting when the moon set early and the light would not be very strong.

The Coloured man duly kept his appointment and slipped Scotty the diamond. In the semi-darkness the latter glanced at it and quickly substituted the alum for the real gem. Then, with an angry exclamation, he gave the false stone to the man, and exclaimed, "You rascal, I'll teach you a lesson trying to trap me like this."

Seizing him by the throat he gave him a good thrashing with a riding whip. At last the trap managed to break loose and ran back to the pair

of policemen who were waiting some distance away for him. They immediately saw that Scotty had palmed off a fake on their employee. They mounted their horses and rode post-haste to his house in an attempt to catch him with the real stone in his possession.

But he had expected them to do this and was prepared. As soon as the trap's back was turned he placed the diamond in an empty sardine tin, which he threw on to a nearby rubbish heap. When the police arrived and searched Scotty they could find no trace of the missing gem. They were unable to take any action against him and had to retire baffled.

Scotty's I.D.B. activities often took him to Kimberley where he was, by this time, wanted by the police on a number of charges. And this is, perhaps, the most amazing fact of all in connection with his long and interesting career that he was able to move about openly and almost with impunity, even when there was a warrant out for his arrest and the officers of the

law were only too eager to make his closer acquaintance.

Mr E.A. Fincham, who once lived a few doors away from Scotty in Vryburg and knew him well, has testified that in the Stellaland republican days, although the police were frequently after him he made no attempt to hide himself. My father, who was in Kimberley during the late 'eighties, also used to tell me that on more than one occasion he saw the redoubtable outlaw walking about on the diggings without any attempt at concealment. At the time he was wanted by the Griqualand West police for a number of offences.

Once, shortly after he had arrived in the diamond city on a visit, Scotty suggested to the proprietor of the hotel where he was staying that he should accompany him on a visit to a certain businessman to whom he owed some money. The proprietor demurred.

"I can't possibly go with you," he remarked. "Surely you know the police are looking for you,

and I wouldn't care to be seen in your company. I think you're very foolish to show yourself like this."

"Oh, that's not news to me," Scotty remarked nonchalantly. "They're always looking for me." And then quite unperturbed he went about his own affairs as though he did not have a care in the world.

Sometimes Scotty's friends would chide him for his foolhardiness in doing this and then he would roar with laughter, making no attempt to conceal his contempt for the servants of the law, and pouring scorn on their efforts to apprehend him.

CHAPTER SIX

CATTLE LIFTER AND HORSE THIEF

Scotty smith had a very soft spot for Kimberley and it was on one of his visits there that he carried out what is probably the best known and most popular of all his exploits.

It was a Saturday morning in the year 1884. The local auctioneer, Mr Goodchild, was holding a horse sale on the market square. Scotty happened to be among the spectators, although apparently no one recognised him. A number of animals were up for auction including a particularly fine black stallion. At these sales it was customary for prospective buyers to be invited to try out any steed which took their fancy, and Scotty decided to take advantage of this practice.

He waited until Mr Goodchild had begun his final chant: "Going ... Going for the third and last time... Going... Going and then mounting the stallion calmly rode round the square, into Du Toitspan Road and out of sight.

"Going...," the auctioneer repeated while he waited for the rider to re-appear, but nothing happened. For a minute or two there was an embarrassed silence, and then the rumour spread like magic among the crowd that it was Scotty who had ridden off with the horse. Someone whispered the information into Goodchild's ear.

"Gone," he shouted, "to Scotty Smith." And then, making the best of a bad job, he added, "Gone... but not forgotten."

The story does not, however, end there. Some months later Scotty walked into the auctioneer's office. "I've come to pay for the horse I bought," he announced.

Mr Goodchild was out, but a clerk accepted the money and gave him a receipt for it. Then he strolled over to the, nearest hotel. Standing at the bar counter was the auctioneer.

"Where's the horse you stole from me?" he yelled as soon as he saw Scotty.

The latter stared at him for a moment. "You'd better be careful what you say," he remarked calmly. Then he stuck his hand into his pocket and produced the receipt. Goodchild looked at it, hardly able to believe his eyes. At last, seeing that it was genuine he stood perplexed, not knowing what to do next.

"Oh, well," he suggested at last, "let's have a drink and forget it."

Scotty was agreeable and so the affair ended amicably after all, although people who knew the outlaw well believed that the auctioneer was extremely lucky to recover the money in this way.

Scotty had, however, still another matter to settle before he took his departure. After a few rounds he got up, left the bar and went to the hotel office.

"You may probably have heard," he greeted the proprietor, "that the last time I was here I had to leave in a hurry. I didn't have time to fix up my bill. I've come to pay it now." He drew a wad of banknotes from his pocket and threw them on the desk.

Another version of the Goodchild story is that the auctioneer employed a number of expert Hottentot riders to show off the paces of the horses he was selling. But the black stallion was such a fiery animal that not one of them succeeded in staying on its back for more than a few minutes at a time. No sooner had a Hottentot

mounted than he would be bucked high into the air and sent sprawling in the dust.

At last the riders flatly refused to make any more attempts.

"He's got the devil in him," they grumbled to one another.

At this stage Mr Goodchild asked for volunteers from the crowd. No one was prepared however, to risk his neck. It was then that a tall man walked slowly towards the horse, spoke to it in a low tone and ran his hand soothingly over its sweating flanks. The high-spirited animal quietened down perceptibly and in a flash the man was in the saddle. Immediately all hell was let loose. The stallion reared, pranced and bucked, but its rider stuck to it like a leech. After a long struggle he managed to bring it under control. Amid the plaudits of the crowd he galloped round the square, waved to the spectators and with a final flourish disappeared down Du Toitspan Road. As he vanished, someone let out a

yell. "By Jove!" he shouted. "That's Scotty Smith."

There is also a brief but revealing sequel to this story: For some years afterwards, Scotty's farm at Kheis on the Orange River produced a fine crop of beautiful black foals!

On a subsequent occasion the famous outlaw pulled off the same type of trick, also at Kimberley, but this time the affair was much more complicated as he acted in a triple capacity as owner, seller and thief.

At this particular sale the men disposed of their horses by private treaty, and so, in order to get the best possible price, each owner put his horse through a display designed to impress potential purchasers with its merits. Scotty of course enjoyed doing this and he staged a grand show. He made his mount dance about and do all kinds of fancy stunts, which would not have disgraced a circus-trained animal.

So impressed was one of the spectators with this performance that he immediately offered

Scotty £50 for the horse, a very good price for those days. The man handed over the money and then Scotty said, "Seeing it's now yours, I'll show you one more trick, the finest it can perform. In fact this is such a good one that I've kept it till the very last."

With these words he mounted the horse and let it tripple until it had gone half-way round the square. Then with a farewell wave of his hand he dug his heels into its sides and galloped away with both the money and the horse.

And here is another of Scotty's horse-stealing exploits, which is reputed to have taken place at Kimberley. In those days the diamond city was famous for its race meetings and Scotty with his fanatical love of thoroughbreds often attended them. On one occasion, after his arrival at the course, he noticed a particularly fine animal under the care of a European groom. The groom was leisurely exercising his charge, and Scotty immediately lost his heart to it. He decided that he would not rest until it was his own property,

so he sauntered casually up to its attendant and engaged him in conversation.

As they strolled slowly up and down they kept passing a refreshment tent in which various kinds of liquor were being served. And it was not long before Scotty said to his companion, "How about a drink?"

"I daren't," the groom reluctantly replied. "There's a rumour that Scotty Smith's in the neighbourhood. It'd be more than my job's worth to let Black Diamond out of my sight for a minute."

Scotty pretended to think. At last he said, "I tell you what. I'll go in first and have a drink, and then you can take your chance and I'll hold Black Diamond for you."

The groom hesitated, but it was the middle of summer, he was hot and thirsty, and the temptation was too great.

"All right," he agreed. "I wouldn't give him to anyone else but I know I can trust you."

So Scotty went into the bar, had a couple of beers, and after a while came out again. Then the parched groom handed over the horse and slipped gratefully into the tent.

When he re-appeared a little later the stranger and Black Diamond were already miles away.

Of course whenever Scotty pulled off a stunt of this kind he had to leave town in a hurry, and he had no time to pay his board and other debts. But it is a queer reflection on his strange conception of moral values that while he could steal a horse he could not bilk an hotel keeper or tradesman. As soon as matters had quietened down, it might be three or even six months later, and he returned to town, one of the first things he did was to seek out his debtors and settle up with him.

Scotty was a man of many moods. He was a good mixer when it suited him, and he usually got on very well with other people. If he really liked someone he might suddenly thaw and regale him with story after story of his various

exploits and escapades. But this was exceptional. As a rule he kept his own counsel and was as taciturn and uncommunicative as the sphinx. An acquaintance of Scotty's informed me that just after the Anglo-Boer War he made a trip into Bechuanaland with the famous outlaw and that during the whole journey the latter never uttered a single word except in answer to a question. This peculiarity of his is corroborated by Lt-Colonel H.F. Trew, the former Deputy Commissioner of South-African Police for the Cape Western area.

"I met Scotty at Upington in 1914," he wrote, "and had a long conversation with him. That is I did most of the talking for he was very silent, and when he discovered I was a police officer he refused to talk at all."

He goes on to add: "A friend of mine spent three months in the Kalahari with Scotty, doing intelligence work for the Government before the war. He said that Scotty knew every inch of the Kalahari and that he was an intensely silent man,

who would often go all day without saying a word."

Many other men who knew Scotty have given similar testimony about this outstanding trait in his character. In particular, Scotty bitterly resented any attempt to cross-question him about his life and experiences. Then he would shut up like a clam, and more than one journalist who tried to pump him for information for a magazine article was sent away disconsolate.

Scotty was by nature essentially a lonely man. Sooner or later he would tire of his gang activities and the need for solitude would press heavily upon him. Then without a word to anyone he would mount one of his famous horses, Cricket, or Lieutenant, and slip off into the blue like a solitary Don Quixote, seeking adventures in all parts of Southern Africa. On these trips he would ride far and wide across the veld or would penetrate deep into the Kalahari Desert. He would suddenly turn up in the most unexpected places, weeks, perhaps months later, he would reappear in his favourite haunts in

Taungs or Kimberley or wherever his headquarters happened to be.

This explains why so many of Scotty's most daring exploits were performed single-handed. It also accounts for his extensive knowledge of the countryside a knowledge which was often to stand him in good stead when he was hard-pressed by his enemies, the republican police and the German military authorities.

On the whole the Boers, except of course those he victimised, had the greatest respect and affection for Scotty, and his quixotic kindness to the poor, the distressed and the ailing made him many friends. Moreover the farmers themselves, with their sturdy spirit of independence and inherent distrust of governmental control, were not as antagonised by his lawless acts as they might otherwise have been. In addition he was an outstanding shot, a fine horseman, an excellent judge of cattle, and a man of determination and courage, all qualities which the Boers greatly admired.

As regards his shooting prowess, a friend of his told me that he sometimes watched him at target practice. He would lie on his back with his gun resting across his thigh, and in this position would shatter an empty beer bottle at 200 paces.

Scotty certainly had a way with him, not only with Europeans, but also with the various non-European races the Bantu, Bushmen, Hottentots, Basters and Griquas with whom he came into contact. One of his favourite pursuits was to make long, solitary expeditions into the Kalahari where he acquired a knowledge and understanding of the Bushmen of the desert regions which has been the privilege of very few white men.

When he subsequently went to live among them and they worked for him on his farm at Leitland's Pan he was able to add considerably to his knowledge of these primitive, Stone Age people. The Bushmen are perhaps the shyest, most suspicious of all living human beings and it is probably Scotty's greatest achievement that he managed to win their trust and confidence.

In return for the many kindnesses which he showed them, they even shared some of their most cherished secrets with him. In this way he learnt the art of survival in the waterless wastes of the Kalahari how to find his way across the trackless dunes, how to communicate with his Bushmen friends, how to interpret their desert signs and messages, and how to detect where their life-saving ostrich eggshells of water were buried.

One mystery, however, his Bushmen friends refused to divulge. This was how they obtained the deadly poison which they used for doctoring their arrows. Scotty did eventually solve this problem, but not with their assistance. It was a young man named Drotsky, whom he had befriended, who disclosed the secret to him.

Scotty knew that Drotsky had grown up among the Bushmen, and so one day he asked him whether he knew how the little yellow men obtained the poison for their arrows.

"Yes," Drotsky replied. "Come with me and I'll show you.

They walked for some distance across the desert and then the young man suddenly stopped and pointed to a *Commiphora kwebensis* tree.

"Ha," he exclaimed. "This is what I was looking for." He got down on his knees and began digging with his hands in the soft sand at the foot of the tree. Soon he had unearthed half a dozen cocoons.

"You see," he explained to Scotty. "This is what the Bushmen use. The *Diamphibia* beetle lays its eggs on the leaves of this particular type of tree. The grubs hatch out, feed on the leaves, and in the course drop to the ground where they burrow into the sand and make their cocoons. He paused. "We'll have to find something to experiment on," he concluded.

They turned round and retraced their steps. They had not gone far before they saw a Hottentot with a mangy dog slinking at his heels. Drotsky gave him a few pennies for it. When

they got home he made a small incision in the unfortunate animal's rump. Then he cut open a couple of the cocoons and rubbed their contents, a yellowy mess, into the cut. So potent was the poison that within a short time the dog was dead.

In spite of his I.D.B., his brigandage, and his other unlawful activities, Scotty's main source of revenue for many years was derived from his cattle-raiding and horse-lifting excursions. Taungs was an ideal centre for these pursuits, as it was in close proximity to half a dozen different states. Scotty always had a convenient frontier across which he could slip when the police of any particular country made things too hot for him. Before long he had a well-organised gang of desperadoes under his command and he used them to carry out spasmodic raids into the Cape Colony, Basutoland, the Free State, Griqualand West, the Transvaal and Bechuanaland.

Besides these men Scotty had a number of partners. These he seems to have changed fairly frequently, but we know that from time to time he was associated with such tough characters as

Loo Abrams, Long Jim, Stumke, Swaxt, George Pearson, Jack Forster, Big Mick O'Connor, Snowy Ward and One-Armed Jetty.

Snowy Ward had a ranch on the Molopo River, near Mafeking. This ranch was, however, nothing more than a blind to cover his real business, which was the smuggling of cattle from the Bechuanaland Protectorate into the Colony. Years afterwards, when someone asked Snowy how he had managed to dodge the police, he replied cryptically, "We had our spies and they told us which door the police went in and which door they came out."

Another man with whom Scotty had a good deal to do at various times was a queer character named Jetty. Jetty was a tall, thin man, but he was extremely tough and wiry. On one occasion in 1887, he and Scotty were out together on a horse-lifting expedition. Among the places which they raided was the farm of a Mr Hartman, which was situated between Dry Harts and Pudimoe in the Taung district.

They managed to steal some horses and were galloping off when the alarm was given. Hartman rushed out in a furious rage and without hesitation put his Martini-Henry to his shoulder and fired. Unfortunately for the thieves his temper did not affect his aim. The heavy bullet struck the unfortunate Jetty in the left arm. And although he and Scotty managed to escape, the limb was so badly shattered that he had to have it amputated above the elbow. His narrow escape from death did not deter the maimed Jetty from carrying on with his illegal pursuits.

Oom Frikkie Bouwer, an old gentleman living at Vryburg, who related the above story to me, also once had a personal encounter with the redoubtable Jetty, in which only his refusal to be overawed saved him from being swindled by the one-armed bandit.

"It was in 1904," he explained, "and I was on my way from Vryburg with a troop of fifty horses which I wished to sell at Keetmanshoop. One day I was riding in front, and I was feeling so tired and drowsy that it was only with the

greatest difficulty that I managed to keep awake and maintain my seat. We were passing quite close to Scotty's place at Lieutenant's Pan. I was nodding in the saddle when all of a sudden I was rudely disturbed by a loud hail: 'Hullo, where are you making for?'

"I must admit I got a terrible fright, but I stopped my horse and looked up. There was Jetty.

"I've an order for ten horses,' he told me, 'and I want to pick out some of yours. It's quite all right,' he waved aside my protests, 'you've nothing to worry about as I'm prepared to pay for them. All you have to do is to call in at Lieutenant's Pan and my partner, Scotty Smith, will give you the money.'

"But I wasn't going to do anything as foolish as that and so I refused point blank, much to Jetty's annoyance. There was, however, nothing much he could do about it, because I had three servants with me. After a while he rode off. And it was a good thing, as I subsequently

discovered, that I hadn't done any business with him.

"I reached Keetmanshoop safely, disposed of my horses, and on the return trip stopped at Scotty's place. When I told him what had happened he laughed. 'Jetty and I parted company a long time ago,' he said. 'It was pure bluff on his part'."

The two ex-partners eventually made up their quarrel, and although they never worked together again they became good friends, and Jetty used to visit Scotty frequently when the latter was living in retirement at Upington.

A man much to Scotty's liking was Loo Abrams, who ran a store and hotel at Taungs. He and Loo were partners in a prospecting syndicate, whose investigations are known to have covered a vast area in British Bechuanaland and the protectorate. In this connection he probably did most of the field work, while Loo organised and financed the expeditions.

For a long time, Scotty made Abrams' hotel his headquarters, and there, sitting on the bar counter, he would plan the coups which were to make his name a household word in South-Africa. Often he would work these out in detail and then entrust their execution to his lieutenants, while he went off on some excursion of his own.

Scotty was a born leader, and much of the success of his enterprises hinged on the fact that he had a flair for picking the right people to work with him. As Major G. Tylden puts it, "He was a great judge of men of all colours, as witness his lieutenants, all, like himself, said to be temperate men in a country of heavy drinkers. However, let no one exaggerate the meaning of the word 'temperate'. They probably all took their whack. Scotty certainly did, but they had the rare virtue of knowing how much they could carry."

In this connection Colonel W.H.C. Taylor told me of rather an amusing incident. Towards the end of the Boer War he was a lance-corporal in the Cape Mounted Police and was staying at

an hotel in Kimberley. One day he was awakened by a terrific din. He rushed out and found that Scotty was the cause of the disturbance. Clad only in his night shirt he was shouting, cursing, and yelling for the wine waiter to serve him. It was six o'clock in the morning!

It is a strange fact about Scotty's career that, although his main illegal activity was cattle-raiding, and during his time he must have run off thousands of head of stock, there are very few stories about his exploits in this respect, although there are numerous anecdotes about his horse thefts.

One of the few recorded episodes, linking Scotty Smith with cattle lifting, was his clash with Gericke, a wealthy Vryburg farmer and rancher. Gericke specialised in cross-bred short-horn stock. He was extremely proud of his herds, and was very fond of bragging about them.

Once he was extolling their virtues to a stranger who had turned up at his homestead and was spending the night there. Now the stranger,

unknown to Gericke, was Scotty's associate, Snowy Ward. Gericke went on boasting about his marvellous shorthorns to such an extent that at last Snowy could not resist the temptation of saying: "You know, Mr. Gericke, I think you're tempting providence by talking like that. Suppose Scotty Smith gets to hear about your wonderful animals."

"Scotty Smith!" Gericke scoffed. "I'd like to see him or any other cattle-rustler get away with my property."

"I believe you're a bit of a gambler," Snowy remarked. "Well, I'm prepared to wager that Scotty'll run off a bunch of your cattle whenever he wants to."

"Done," Gericke roared. "What'll you bet?"

"We'll arrange it like this," Snowy Ward replied. "If Scotty succeeds, he keeps the cattle and you can pay their value in cash to charity. If he fails, he'll give a similar amount to the poor."

This seems somewhat one-sided. Gericke, however, was a rich man and in any case he was absolutely certain he could deal with Scotty.

"Right," he cried. "But there must be a time limit. How about a week?"

Snowy agreed and then left to see Scotty. Gericke immediately doubled the guards on his ranch and took certain other precautionary measures. All these, however, proved to be in vain. A few days later when he counted his herds he found that there were about fifty head of cattle missing. Scotty, with the aid of his Bushmen trackers, had taken advantage of a pitch-dark night to visit the farm and to cut out the beasts he required.

On discovering his loss Gericke immediately sent out search parties in an attempt to recover the stolen animals but all his attempts to find them were fruitless. Scotty's men had already driven them safely into the desert. There his gang re-branded them and then sent them through Mafeking to Johannesburg where they

were sold on the local stock market at a good price. Scotty gave Snowy his cut and retained the rest of the money for himself. It is to Gericke's credit that he was a good loser. He kept his word and gave the sum agreed upon to the authorities for distribution among the poor of the district.

This is one of the few melodramatic cattle-raiding exploits of Scotty's which have been handed down to posterity. On the other hand there are dozens of dramatic stories about his horse-stealing activities. This is understandable because horses were a much more personal possession than cattle. To-day, in this motor-ridden age, it is almost impossible to appreciate the bonds of trust, confidence and affection which existed between a man and his favourite mount. Men bragged about the excellence of their horses, about their appearance, their stamina, their speed, their sagacity and their faithfulness, and it was every young farmer's ambition to possess the finest steed in the district.

With Scotty, horses were an absolute mania. He no sooner saw an outstanding animal than he was itching to put his bridle on it. As a result he was continually engaged in duels of wit to acquire an animal which had taken his fancy, but which its owner would no more have thought of selling than he would have considered disposing of his wife.

Take for example the following three episodes, which are typical of the methods that Scotty employed to get what he wanted. The first of these occurred in Vryburg and the other two in Hopetown.

One evening in the bar of a Vryburg hotel the subject of Scotty Smith and his various exploits cropped up. One of the men, a young farmer, boasted that he would be too clever for the outlaw and that the latter would never manage to steal his horse. Now standing on one side was a tall, well-built man, who had hitherto taken no part in the conversation: Although no one recognised him it was Scotty Smith himself. Suddenly he addressed the last speaker.

"Looks to me as though you're tempting providence," he remarked. "If Scotty were to hear what you've just said you'd be likely to lose that horse of yours."

"He'd have to be a smart one to get the better of me," the man scoffed.

"Is that so?" Scotty Smith replied. "As it happens, I know him well. I'll tell him what you say and I'm prepared to bet you £5 that within a fortnight he'll have made off with your horse."

The farmer accepted the bet and they each deposited £5 with the barman, who agreed to hold the stakes. The owner then took his companions along to the stable to show them that the door was securely padlocked and that his own Basuto groom was on guard. About midnight, when the company had dispersed, Scotty slipped outside. He had a bottle of brandy in his hand and as he approached the guard he stopped and, putting the bottle to his mouth, took a long draught.

"Want a drink?" he asked the boy, who was feeling cold and miserable.

"Ja, Baas," was the eager reply.

Scotty sat down and the bottle passed quickly from one to the other. Before long the Basuto was so drunk and sleepy that he lay down and lapsed into a comatose state. Then Scotty acted. He picked the lock, opened the door and led the animal out. Mounting his own horse he rode away with the other animal on a lead. It is typical of Scotty that he was quite prepared to sacrifice the wager money in order to teach his opponent a lesson.

On a particularly hot summer's day Scotty rode into the dusty little village of Hopetown and made straight for the bar.

As he entered the hotel his quick eye took in the half-dozen horses tied to the rail.

"Give me a brandy," he ordered the barman.

He was drinking it when one of the men turned to him and asked, "Have you seen Scotty Smith lately?"

"No," he replied. "Why?"

"He's stolen some of our horses," the man explained, "and we're looking for the scoundrel."

Scotty downed his brandy and ordered another. He took one gulp and put the half-empty glass on the counter. Then he called to the barman, "Give all these gentlemen another round. The drinks are on me."

As they thanked him he remarked, "Excuse me for a few minutes. I must see to my horse. I won't be long."

He paid for the liquor and then, leaving his unfinished glass behind, he went out. Time passed and he did not return. At last one of the men became suspicious. He opened the door and looked around. There was not an animal in sight. He gave the alarm and the men, cursing and swearing, rushed into the street. Unfortunately

for them Scotty had vanished and they never saw their horses again.

The third incident shows Scotty in a much better light. It also happened in Hopetown at the same hotel, but some years afterwards. Scotty was chatting to a number of farmers in the bar when one of them remarked, "You fellows had better look after your horses. I hear Scotty's operating in the neighbourhood."

Immediately another farmer, who owned a particularly fine stallion, put in: "He'll never get my horse. I'm much too careful of him, and I guard him night and day."

When Scotty heard this remark he made his way casually towards the speaker.

"How about a game of nap?" he asked.

The man was agreeable so Scotty took out a pack of cards and they began playing.

As the game went on, however, the owner of the horse found it difficult to concentrate and it was soon obvious that he was becoming

increasingly uneasy about the safety of his steed. At last he could stand it no longer. In between hands he got up, went outside and put a lead on his horse. Then he pinched the lead fast in the door and holding its end in his hand sat down to continue playing. Some time later Scotty made a conventional excuse and himself slipped out. When he failed to return the farmer jumped up, and to his consternation found that he was grasping an empty thong. Scotty had cut the other end and had disappeared with the horse. It was a pitch-dark night and, realising the futility of pursuit, the man went to bed.

The next morning he was up early, but naturally there was no sign of his beautiful stallion, and so he made his way sadly home. About a mile from his house he suddenly stopped and, hardly able to believe his eyes, let out a yell of amazement. There, fastened to a tree, was his horse waiting for him. A note was tied to its saddle. He unfolded this and read:

"I can see that you love your horse and take good care of it. You have an excellent animal

and I know how you must be grieving for it. I haven't the heart to keep it, so I'm returning it to you. But next time don't be quite so certain that Scotty can't get away with your property if he wants to."

That was one man who lived to bless the day that the outlaw was such a great connoisseur and lover of horses.

Scotty's queer, perverse sense of humour grew with the years and he became very fond of playing pranks on people out of sheer devilry. Sometimes these hoaxes would take the form of stealing their property, even when he had no intention of keeping it. For a vivid eye-witness account of one of these hoaxes I am indebted to my very oldest living contact with the outlaw, ninety-five-year-old Mr George Brooke of Piketberg in the Cape.

In spite of his venerable age, Mr Brooke's memory is still excellent and he was easily able to recall the following scene, which took place well over seventy years ago:

"At the time I was living at Kelderfontein in the Boshof district," he told me. "One day I was driving a cart, drawn by four mules and laden with butter, eggs, vegetables and other garden produce for the Kimberley market, when I passed an ox-wagon outspanned by the side of the road. There was an old man sitting next to it, and he had his horse tethered to the back of the wagon.

"I stopped and asked him why he did not release the animal and allow it to graze. He looked at me and then said, 'I'd like to do so, but I'm afraid Scotty Smith'll steal it.'

"I left him, and on my return trip I met the same old man near the little wayside hotel at Frankfurt, this time, however, without the horse. I enquired where it was and he said that it had been stolen and he was sure the culprit was Scotty Smith. It then transpired that he had camped out the previous night on a ridge overlooking the hotel. Before going to sleep he had made sure that his horse was securely fastened, and he had also taken the precaution of

loading his gun and putting it down next to him. But when he awoke the following morning the animal was gone.

"While we were talking about this another man arrived on the scene. He was mounted and was leading the missing horse on a halter. He handed it over to its rightful owner and then remarked, 'I'm Scotty Smith. Don't you run me down again. I only took your horse to teach you a lesson. I've never yet robbed a poor man.'

"Instead of being pleased, as I had expected, the old man was very angry.

"'If I'd seen you last night,' he muttered, 'I'd have shot you.'

"'Oh,' the stranger chuckled, 'I was well aware of that, so I took care to unload your gun first before removing your horse.' And with that he turned and left us."

The following anecdote shows Scotty again in a much less favourable light and illustrates the fact that he could be quite unscrupulous and vindictive when it suited his book.

He was once annoyed because two Griquas from whom he had purloined a horse actually had the audacity to attempt to recover it. They were in a small cart drawn by two oxen, and were searching for him in the desert when he came across them. They failed to recognise him and so he told them that he was also looking for Scotty, because the latter had stolen some of his cattle.

After some discussion they decided to combine their efforts to recover their property. To seal the bargain and to drink success to their venture, the newcomer produced a bottle of brandy. The Griquas could not resist this and Scotty soon had them dead drunk. Then, to add insult to injury, he cut out the seat of their breeches and, making off with their cart and oxen, left them lying in a stupor on the veld.

On another occasion Scotty found himself in the small Transvaal town of Wolmaransstad. There he saw a pair of pure white cart-horses fastened to a rail outside the Government offices. The sight of these magnificent animals was too

much for him. He immediately felt that he must acquire them at all costs. He went into the building and asked the clerk, who was sitting there, to whom they belonged.

"They're the landdrost's," was the reply.

Just then that official came in. Scotty introduced himself, giving a false name, and then adding:

"That's a wonderful pair of horses you have outside."

"Yes," the landdrost proudly agreed. "I don't think there's a finer pair in the whole of the Transvaal."

"Do you want to sell them? You see," Scotty glibly lied, "I'm buying horses for De Beers. I'll give you good money for them. Just state your price."

The official shook his head emphatically. "They're not for sale. Look, man," he boasted, "I'll tell you something. I wouldn't sell them for all your marvellous diamonds in Kimberley."

"Oh, well," Scotty sighed, "I know when I'm beaten. But I don't blame you for not wanting to part with them." He said good-bye and was on the point of leaving when the landdrost stopped him.

"If you're buying horses," he remarked, "I'd like to give you a friendly warning. I hear that scoundrel Scotty Smith's in the neighbourhood, and he's also acquiring horses. Only unlike you and other honest buyers he doesn't pay for the animals he collects," and he roared with laughter at his own joke.

"Thanks for the tip," Scotty replied, with a perfectly straight face. "I'll be on my guard. But what about you? I understand this Scotty Smith's got a fine eye for a good beast. I'm sure if he sees these animals of yours he won't rest until he's got them for himself, so you'd better be careful, too."

"What, that rogue! " the man scoffed. "I'm too smart for him. I tell you he hasn't a hope. Every night I lock them up myself and I fasten my watchdog to a stake next to the stable doors. That

dog would tear a lion to pieces if he put his nose there after dark."

"Saints alive!" Scotty exclaimed in an admiring tone of voice. "I see you're really a smart man. It would indeed be a foolish man who attempted to steal your horses."

The landdrost leant forward. "And what's more," he said in a confidential whisper, "I'm a light sleeper. The slightest sound wakes me and I keep my loaded gun next to my bed. If I hear anything funny going on in the night someone's going to get a charge of buckshot in his backside and he won't like that."

All this extravagant bragging, of course, instead of putting Scotty off, only made him the more determined to outwit the self-confident official. He realised, however, that the operation needed careful planning. After, taking farewell of the landdrost his first step was to find out where his house was. Then he strolled casually past it, taking in the position of the stable and the stake to which the dog was tied. The hound was

indeed a fierce, powerful-looking brute, but Scotty had already worked out his own plan to overcome this obstacle.

His next stop was at the local butcher's shop, where he bought a pound of steak. After this he returned to the hotel. That night, when dinner was over, he retired to his room. Owing to his veterinary training, Scotty was often called in by farmers to attend to their sick animals, and so he always kept a well-stocked medicine chest, containing drugs and poisons, at his house. When he was on one of his trips he made it a practice to take some of his more useful drugs with him. He now selected one of the most potent of these and carefully doctored the meat with it. Then he lay down on his bed and waited for the time to pass.

Shortly after midnight, when the little town was wrapped in slumber, Scotty got up and, taking the piece of steak in his hand, left the hotel and made his way towards the landdrost's house. When he got near it he approached with the greatest circumspection, making sure that he

remained down wind from the dog, so that it would not get his scent. Moving as silently as a ghost, he reached the fence surrounding the yard and threw the lump of meat into the air so that it would land next to the ferocious dog. But he miscalculated slightly and it hit the animal on the back.

The faithful hound had evidently been fast asleep. It let out a startled yelp, gave a couple of short, fierce growls and then settled down to chewing and swallowing the steak.

Standing silently in the dark shadows Scotty expected at any moment to hear a window being pushed up and to see the vigilant landdrost appear on the scene with his shotgun. But nothing happened, so evidently the latter was not quite as light a sleeper as he tried to make out. Scotty was taking no chances, however, and he made no move until nearly an hour had passed. Then he slipped round to the front gate and crept noiselessly along the side of the house to the yard.

His stratagem had worked. He was able to approach the stable doors without the dog making the slightest attempt to attack him. In fact the animal was lying on its side, dead to the world and breathing stertorously through its nose. With a piece of wire Scotty expertly picked the stable lock, opened the back gate and led the horses out. By the time the landdrost woke the next morning and found that his steeds had disappeared, the outlaw was already miles away on the road back to Kimberley.

There was a queer streak of puckish humour in Scotty which sometimes led him to perform the most foolish pranks of bravado, as witness this anecdote, related to me by Mr G. Bergh.

One day Scotty and Mr Bergh's father, Oloff, were sitting in the bar of the Vryburg Hotel when they overheard a young farmer telling his friends that he had obtained a very good price for his cattle at the local stock sales that morning. At the same time he rather ostentatiously produced two bags of money and banged them down on the bar counter.

One of his friends jokingly remarked, "You'd better be careful. Scotty Smith might hear about this and then you'll be sorry you didn't keep quiet."

"Ag," the young blood boasted. "If he interferes with me I'll shoot him dead with this gun," and he lightly touched his hip pocket.

Oloff smiled at his companion, whose back was to the men, but Scotty never said a word, or gave the slightest indication that he was listening to what was being said. After a while the farmer and his friends left the room and, mounting their horses, took their several ways home. Then Scotty got to his feet and leaning on the counter said to the barman, "Bradford, I want you to do me a favour. Lend me one of those leather pipe cases hanging on the wall behind you."

These cases looked very much like revolver holsters, and Oloff Bergh wondered what his friend was up to, but the latter did not enlighten him at the time. Putting the case in his pocket he went to the stables, saddled his horse and rode

off in the direction which the young farmer had taken. It was a clear moonlight night and Scotty had no difficulty in catching up with his quarry, who was by this time alone. Drawing level he pulled out the pipe case and, pointing it at the man's heart, ordered him to stand and deliver. His terrified victim received such a fright that he immediately handed over his money and his revolver without offering the slightest resistance.

Scotty then turned his horse round and rode back to Vryburg. Going into the hotel he contemptuously threw the bags of money and the revolver on to the counter and said to the barman, "Look, Bradford, you know to whom these belong. If that young whippersnapper comes back to claim them, return them to him with my compliments."

In due course a frightened man did return and gave the barman a graphic account of how he had been waylaid and robbed. Bradford let him finish his story and then handed him his property. "Let this be a lesson to you, young

man," he said sternly, "to keep your mouth shut when you're in strange company."

CHAPTER SEVEN

PRANKS AND ESCAPADES

As the years passed, Scotty's consistent vendetta against the forces of law and order seems to have become an obsession with him. He took an especially perverse delight in making fools of Government officials whenever the opportunity arose. Once, for example, he happened to be paying a visit to Lindley in the Free State. The local landdrost possessed a very fine Cape cart and a pair of outstanding horses. Immediately Scotty's eye fell on them he decided to play a trick on the owner and give him a fright. That night he appropriated the outfit and drove to the next village.

The following morning, when the loss was discovered, there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth in the Landdrost's home. But his grief was shortlived. Suddenly, in the midst of his distress, the missing cart and horses drove

up to his front door and the Hottentot driver handed him a note from Scotty, thanking him for his kindness in "lending" him the turn-out and assuring him that he had taken good care of the horses.

Another prank, which Scotty was fond of playing on officialdom, was his impersonation of a veldcornet, a sheriff, or some other law-enforcement officer. Perhaps the most delightful of these hoaxes concerns a certain Transvaal civil servant who was on his way to take up his new appointment as Landdrost of Ventersdorp. This man was spending a night at a small wayside inn when Scotty arrived on the scene. They struck up an acquaintanceship and the outlaw soon discovered that the new landdrost was quite unknown in the Ventersdorp district. The temptation to take his place was too great to resist. That night after dinner they adjourned to the bar and began drinking. But of course, in an unequal contest of this kind the official did not have a chance against the experienced Scotty. The latter was just beginning to warm up when

his companion collapsed. Very solicitously he put him to bed and gently relieved him of his keys and official documents. In order to forestall any immediate pursuit he went to the stables, set free all the horses, and then mounting his own steed, rode hard for Ventersdorp.

He reached the town about nine o'clock in the morning and made straight for the Government offices where he had no difficulty in passing himself off as the new landdrost. He audited the books in a businesslike manner, pocketed what little money there was in the cash box, and then made a formal inspection of the jail. To his delight he discovered in one of the cells a fellow thief, who was being held in connection with a rather shady horse transaction. Scotty calmly set him free and together they rode safely away long before the real landdrost appeared on the scene.

During my researches into Scotty Smith's history I have found plenty of evidence to support the thesis that he only victimised certain people and that he never took advantage of his

friends or of anyone whom he had promised not to molest.

There was one rather humorous exception to this immunity of Scotty's friends from his depredations. At one time he was farming at Rietpan on the Modder River on a property which he had hired from a local farmer, Hendrik Ritchie. When any horses vanished from his stables Mr Ritchie, knowing his tenant's reputation only too well, did not trouble to look for them. All he did was to send a note to Scotty informing him that half a dozen of his animals had disappeared. On the following morning when he awoke he would invariably find the missing steeds grazing peacefully in front of his homestead. This went on for a long time, until the joke palled on Scotty and he stopped "borrowing" his landlord's horses.

Mr F.L. St Leger, a member of the well-known Cape Town family, recalled in an interview in the *Cape Times* some years ago that he had known Scotty well, and so when he was living in the Vryberg district his stock was

always spared. He gives an amusing account of how he and some of his friends were out riding one day when they passed a party of men on horseback. These people stopped to warn them that Scotty was in the neighbourhood and they must exercise extreme vigilance if they did not want to lose their horses. Mr St Leger did not worry; however, as he knew that he was quite safe. His confidence was justified because, although he and his companions were not interfered with, he found on his return that the other party had lost all its horses.

This reminiscence of Mr St Leger's evoked a similar story from a correspondent, who described his own personal meeting with the outlaw. The correspondent had set out from Kimberley and was on his way to Mafeking at the time when Scotty Smith was at the height of his career, and as he proceeded on his journey he became increasingly concerned about the safety of his horses. During the trip he met a stranger and in the course of conversation mentioned his anxiety. Politely the latter assured him that he

had nothing to fear from Scotty as that busy man had a far bigger affair on hand. A little later he learnt to his astonishment that the polite stranger had been Scotty Smith himself.

In August, 1886, the discovery of gold on the site of the present town of Ottoshoop near the Malmani River in the Zeerust district sparked off yet another South-African gold rush. The boom only lasted about a year, but in the beginning the finds were reported to be fabulously rich and they attracted miners from all parts of South-Africa.

Among those who went there to seek their fortunes were Scotty Smith and his old friend, George Beet. Mr Beet and Scotty had known one another since the early Stellaland-Goshen days, and their trails kept crossing. But although Scotty had a great respect and liking for his friend, and never let him down, the latter does not appear to have quite trusted the outlaw, and never got over his feeling of uneasiness when he was in his company.

In justice to Mr Beet, however, it should be recorded that many other men had the same reaction to Scotty's presence. Oom Frikkie Bouwer, for example, was one of these. But as we shall see, he certainly had more justification than most people for exhibiting signs of nervousness when he was with him.

On his way to Malmani, George Beet arrived at Piet Marais' farm and decided to do some prospecting there, so he put up at the house of Daantje Grundligh, who was Mr Marais' manager. Now Piet Marais was a noted horse breeder and he had recently imported a magnificent English stallion at great cost to add to his stud. He very kindly lent this fine animal to his visitor, who wished to call at a neighbouring homestead.

Beet had gone about half-way on his journey and was riding along a narrow path when he saw Scotty and his gang approaching from the opposite direction. He was very conscious of the mount he was riding and it was with a sinking

heart that he realised it was too late to avoid a meeting.

When they got within hailing distance, Scotty recognised him and sang out, "Hello, Mr Beet, is that you?"

"Yes," Beet replied, hardly able to conceal his anxiety. And then his worst fears seemed to be confirmed. Scotty gave the stallion a keen, penetrative glance, and an involuntary look of admiration spread over his face.

"That's a fine horse you're riding, Mr Beet. To whom does it belong?"

"It's Piet Marais'," Beet rejoined rather sharply. "Now, Scotty, don't you go casting envious eyes on it."

"It's quite all right," Scotty laughed. "I wouldn't touch anything belonging to old Piet."

Mr Beet had another reason for feeling nervous. Round his waist he was wearing a money belt with one hundred sovereigns in it, and so he was keen to get away from Scotty as

soon as possible. But the latter was feeling like company, and announced that he was going to accompany him. When they reached their destination they were cordially welcomed by the farmer Beet was visiting and had breakfast together. Then Scotty left, much to his friend's relief, although he really knew that the outlaw was a man of his word and that he was quite safe from his depredations.

On a subsequent occasion, about four years later, Scotty again gave George Beet a fright. Beet was prospecting for gold in the Langeberg range, and was following up a gold-bearing reef of banket, which was superficially similar to the Witwatersrand formation and looked very promising. He had wandered away from the rest of his party and was so absorbed in what he was doing that he received quite a shock when a thickset man dressed in rough corduroys rode up and told him that Scotty was close at hand, helping a surveyor, and would like to have a friendly chat with him.

Now by a strange coincidence Beet again had about a hundred pounds in cash on him. As he thought of this all his old distrust of the outlaw arose and he decided to avoid meeting him if possible. Making the excuse that he was feeling unwell he sent a message to Scotty regretting that he would not be able to come. He then hurried back to rejoin the rest of his party and left the neighbourhood as quickly as possible. When recording this incident later, Beet did have the grace to admit that he was probably misjudging Scotty and that the latter would never have stolen anything of his.

This lack of confidence in Scotty, of which he was never quite able to divest himself, is all the more difficult to understand because Beet himself collected a number of interesting stories about Scotty, which are all to the latter's credit. He recounts, for example, how a man once rode up to Mr Rademan's farm at Kaffersdam and, introducing himself as "Mr Olivier," asked for accommodation for the night. Rademan immediately recognised him as Scotty Smith whom he

had met before. But although he had a horse of which he was very proud he gave not the slightest sign that he knew who the man was, and readily agreed to his request for permission to spend the night there.

When it was time to retire, Rademan showed his guest to his room and then remarked, "There's just one thing, Mr Olivier. I want you to do me a favour. Spare that stallion of mine that's in the stable."

Scotty was quite upset when he realised that he had been recognised.

"So you still remember me, Mr Rademan, do you?"

"I do. You can take any of the other horses you like but not the stallion."

"All right," Scotty promised. "I won't touch anything of yours."

In spite of this comforting assurance, Rademan had an uneasy night and was up at three o'clock the next morning. He went to wake

Scotty and his fears were not allayed when he found that he had already left. With an anxious heart he hurried down to the stables. But he need not have worried. The stallion was there and also all his other horses.

Another visitor who had spent the night at the farm was not, however, so fortunate. His two horses were gone. And shortly afterwards quite a few farmers in the district had cause to complain that so many of their animals had mysteriously vanished.

Once, many years afterwards, when George Beet was being driven in a cart by one of Taungs' oldest residents, the driver told him a number of stories about the famous outlaw. He informed his passenger that he and Scotty were on very good terms. One day he received a message from the outlaw that he was planning an extensive raid on the horses in the district. But he was assured that if those belonging to himself and to certain of his friends were specially stabled they would be spared. The driver passed the word on to the men concerned and although

the raid duly took place and many farmers suffered heavy losses, their animals were not molested.

Mr Beet also gives an amusing account of how terrified people were of Scotty Smith and his reputation. Beet had a brother named Arthur, who owned a large store at Taungs in the middle 'eighties of last century. One day Arthur Beet was returning home along the main road from Kuruman when he met a rider, who asked him where he was going. As soon as the stranger found out that he was on his way to Taungs he said that he would like to accompany him. Arthur agreed and while they were riding together his companion enquired whether he knew Scotty Smith.

"No," was the blunt reply, "and what's more, I don't want to know the scoundrel."

Nothing more was said on this subject and when they arrived at Taungs they went over to Loo Abrams' store. As they approached it Loo sang out, "Hello, Scotty."

Arthur received such a fright that he immediately left. Stumbling into his own shop, which was crowded at the time, all he could manage to gasp out was, "What's... what's yours?"

This caused great merriment in the town and Arthur Beet took a long time to live it down. For some years he could not put in an appearance anywhere without being greeted with the embarrassing query, "What's ... what's yours?"

Such fear did the name of Scotty Smith inspire in those days in any traveller who was riding a decent horse that his first question on stopping at an hotel was whether the bandit was in the neighbourhood. And the more fearful a man was of meeting Scotty the more chance he apparently had of actually coming into personal contact with the outlaw.

The striking fact that, once Scotty had tasted another man's bread, he never abused his hospitality is well illustrated by the well-known story of his encounter with the famous Matabele

Thompson. At the time Mr Thompson was living on his farm, Cornforth Hill, on the Harts River.

One afternoon in 1882 his wife, who had been out for a ride on the veld, was returning home. While she was crossing a donga her horse suddenly shied. At the same moment a tall, handsome man emerged from a clump of reeds. She glanced at him and was immediately impressed by his polite bearing and gentlemanly appearance.

As she passed him she nodded and he gave her a low, courtly bow. When her husband returned home she told him of the incident. Darkness fell and shortly afterwards a servant brought a message to say that a stranger had arrived and was asking for lodgings for the night. Without going out, Mr Thompson gave instructions that he was to be given a bed and should be well looked after. Scotty was shown to one of the outside rooms and was served with a good dinner.

At dawn, Matabele Thompson heard a light tap on his bedroom window, and then a cultured voice whispered, "Good-bye, Mr Thompson. Thank you very much for your hospitality."

Shortly afterwards, as the sun was rising, an agitated servant arrived with the calamitous news that all Mr Thompson's horses had been stolen. A hurried search was organised but was completely unsuccessful. About two hours later, however, the whole troop of forty horses arrived back at the homestead in charge of a man, who had a note for the owner. It was from Scotty Smith and explained that the animals had been taken in error with some other stock which his men were rounding up.

"You treated me very well," the note concluded, "and as your guest I ate your salt. I therefore had no intention of robbing you. It was an unpardonable mistake on the part of my servants."

These are ideal sentiments, and Scotty was undoubtedly genuine when he expressed them.

But he was an unpredictable man, with the most unorthodox ideas of what was right and what was wrong, and apparently for him the converse did not hold. Thus, while he would not deign to rob his host, he had no scruples about preying on his guests. At any rate this was the unfortunate experience which Oom Frikkie Bouwer suffered at his hands.

"Once," he recalled, "I was travelling in the desert with a Scotch cart and six oxen. I was near Lieutenant's Pan and so I decided to stop there. Scotty appeared to be genuinely pleased to see me and, as it was towards sunset, he invited me to spend the night with him. I gladly accepted and was most hospitably entertained. The next morning, however, when I wanted to continue my journey, I found that my oxen had disappeared.

"I spent practically the whole day looking for them, and Scotty was most energetic, pretending to help me. At last he said that it was hopeless and we might as well give up the search:

“‘I'll tell you what,’ he remarked, ‘I'll give you four of my own beasts.’

"Although I had my doubts about what had happened to my animals, I had to be content with this, and so I lost no time in leaving. It was only afterwards that I discovered that my suspicions were true and that Scotty had stolen my oxen and hidden them in a safe place until I had gone."

Mr Bower seems to have been particularly unlucky in his encounters with the outlaw. "On another occasion," he told me, "I was riding in the vicinity of the desert police station at Rietfontein when I met Scotty. At the time I was mounted on a very fine roan, and I could see from the look on his face that he was badly smitten. In fact he coveted my horse so much that he pestered the life out of me to let him have it. Eventually he offered me £50 for it. But I refused as I had no intention of selling my horse. At last, when he realised that it was hopeless, he desisted and rode off."

"After my previous experience with him, I was determined not to be caught again. I deliberately rode to the police post and asked for accommodation for the night. I thought that by taking this precaution my roan would be quite safe. I might just as well have saved myself the trouble. The next morning the horse was gone, and in its place Scotty had left £50 in notes."

Even after this long interval of time, Oom Frikkie smiled ruefully, "I wasn't a bit pleased," he concluded sadly. "It was really a magnificent animal, and I would've given anything to get it back again."

In those days Kimberley was a great centre for race meetings and Mr C. Woods, a prominent local trainer, was once taking a string of horses down to an important meeting in the town. Suddenly a band of armed horsemen rode out and surrounded him. They held him up at pistol point and their leader demanded that he should hand over his horses. Instead of being frightened Mr Woods was indignant. Realising that this was

almost certain to be Scotty Smith's gang, he shouted out:

"You can't possibly do this. The owner of these animals is Mr ---, and he is well known to Scotty."

The reaction was immediate. "Put away your guns," the highwayman ordered his men.

"I'm terribly sorry," he apologised to Mr Woods. "It's a mistake. I'd no idea these horses belonged to Mr---" To show there was no ill-feeling he produced a bottle of whisky and they drank one another's health before going their separate ways.

This is a good example of how Scotty played the game with his friends. There is no doubt, too, that he was a sportsman and if beaten in fair fight was large-hearted enough to forgive his opponent and not bear any malice towards him. We have in fact evidence of how on more than one occasion, when he received the worst of an encounter, he displayed this magnanimous spirit. In his old age he was fond of relating how in his

unregenerate days he once caught a tartar and got more than he bargained for.

Scotty had spies and informants, who kept him supplied with news of what was happening in various parts of the country. One day he received intelligence that a prominent Free State farmer had been paid a very good price for his wool clip. He had been into the town to collect his money and was on his way home when Scotty suddenly appeared in front of him with a loaded pistol in his hand and demanded his money.

The Boer was carrying this in a bag attached to his saddle. He immediately handed it over with the remark, "My life's worth more to me than any money. But you know, Scotty," he added, "I've always heard that you were a sport. I don't think it's playing the game to take my money in this way. You are armed and I'm not. Why not put the bag and the pistol down and let's fight it out with our fists to see who's the better man? I'll wager my cash against your pistol that I'm that man."

It was impossible for Scotty to resist such a challenge. And in any case he had immediately sized up his opponent, who was a small man, and whom he judged to be at least a couple of stone lighter than himself. So he jumped off his horse, carefully placed his pistol on top of the bag of money, and squared up to his adversary. He thought it would be a walkover, but he quickly learnt his mistake. The Boer must have been a potential champion. He proceeded to give the outlaw a sound thrashing. When it was over he calmly rode off with the money and the gun.

A few weeks later Scotty again got the tip that some farmers, who had obtained very good prices for their wool, were returning that evening to their farms. Once more he lay in ambush, determined to make up for his previous fiasco. At last he saw a couple of men approaching. He was on the point of rushing out and stopping them when to his surprise he recognised that one of them was the man who had recently given him a good hiding. It is certain that not many men in his position would have sacrificed this

opportunity for revenge. There was nothing petty, however, about Scotty and it says much for his magnanimity that he immediately changed his mind and allowed his victor to return safely home. Nor did the latter ever discover how close he had come to being robbed for the second time.

According to one writer, Scotty once had the tables turned on him when he himself was waylaid and robbed by a party of gentlemen of the road, who had somehow discovered that he was carrying a large sum of gold on him. As usual, however, he had the last laugh. One evening towards dusk he was riding alone across the veld at dusk in the Southern Transvaal when a number of men suddenly surrounded him and held him up at pistol point.

“Your money or your life!” their leader shouted. Without the slightest hesitation Scotty replied, “Take my money,” and handed over the two heavy bags fastened to his saddle. The robbers rode off and it was only when they examined their booty that they found how they

had been tricked. Before setting out Scotty had secreted the gold coins on his person and had filled the bags with pennies.

Major Jesser Coope, who afterwards became a well-known citizen of Southern Rhodesia, also had an encounter about this time with the famous freebooter, which redounds much to the latter's credit. It was the year 1890, and Jesser Coope, then a young subaltern in the British South-African Police, was in charge of a number of remounts which had been purchased in the Vryburg district. It was his custom to have the horses counted each morning before leaving the place where they had stayed for the night. At the very first camp after leaving Vryburg he found that two of the mounts were missing.

Now Jesser Coope had had a tremendous battle rounding up his tough, hard-drinking men and getting them out of the Vryburg canteens on the previous day. He had no illusions about what would happen if they were sent out to search for the missing steeds. They would make a bee-line

back to the town, and he would have all his trouble over again.

He therefore gave strict instructions that they were to remain in the camp. Then with an old hand, who knew a good deal about the art of tracking, he followed the trail of the missing animals until he came to a cart outspanned not very far from Vryburg. A tall man with a beard came out to see what he wanted. The old hand immediately whispered to his officer, "That's Scotty Smith. He's sure to have pinched the horses."

But when Jesser Coope taxed Scotty with the theft he blandly denied that he knew anything about it. Jesser Coope, however, refused to believe this and after a while Scotty admitted that he had taken the horses. Then with an impudent grin on his face he offered to fight the officer for them.

Now Jesser Coope was an old English public school boy, and like so many of his kind he had shown more prowesses on the sports field and in

the gymnasium than in the classroom. He was a first-class boxer, so he immediately accepted the challenge. But Scotty was only testing him out, or perhaps his unfortunate encounter with the young farmer was still fresh in his memory and had made him more cautious than he would otherwise have been. At any rate he roared with laughter, and treated the whole matter as a joke.

"All right, you win," he cried. "You can have your horses back."

They shook hands on it and Scotty sent his man to fetch the missing animals. Then he rode back with the officer to his camp and they made a night of it.

And here is the story of another encounter, which Scotty had with the B.S.A.P. One day a young officer of that famous corps arrived in Mafeking. He was in charge of a hundred remounts, which he and two troopers were taking back to the force. They attended to the horses and then picketed them in a large open space in the middle of the town, after which, hot, dusty

and exhausted, they retired to the hotel for the night.

Before dawn the officer awoke with an uneasy feeling. Suddenly realising that he had not taken the elementary precaution of appointing a night guard over the horses he hurried out to see whether they were all right. And then he stopped dead. There was not a single horse in sight. With growing panic he hastily summoned his men. For three days they searched frantically but without success for the missing steeds. The horses appeared to have vanished into thin air. There was one clue, however, to their fate. At widely scattered points on the veld the troopers picked up a few halter ropes, halters and picket pegs, which seemed to indicate that something must have stampeded the animals.

At last, in a state of profound dejection, and with visions of being court martialled and cashiered floating before his eyes, the young officer decided to consult the barman about the possibility of obtaining a number of Barolong

tribesmen to help him in his search. The barman, however, was not very encouraging. He had a pretty shrewd idea who the culprit was, and so he suggested that the best thing the subaltern could do would be to reconcile himself to his loss.

At this stage a tall, silent man, who had been standing on one side listening to the conversation, suddenly intervened. Impressed by the young officer's obvious distress, he walked up to him and in a friendly manner asked, "What year were you at Sandhurst?"

Taken aback by this unexpected question, the youngster told him, and then poured out his troubles into the stranger's sympathetic ear. The latter listened in silence until he had finished and then patted him on the shoulder.

"Don't worry, my boy," he remarked kindly, "I know this part of the country extremely well and I'll see what I can do for you. Send your men off to have a good rest." Then dropping his voice he added in a much sharper tone, "Now pull yourself together, young man, and don't give

way like this. Just imagine what impression your present state would have on your colonel, were he to get wind of it. It's fortunate for you that I'm not your adjutant!"

The officer retired in a very crestfallen mood. But at dawn the next morning he was awakened by the unexpected sound of the neighing and whinnying of a large number of horses. Hardly able to believe his ears, he jumped out of bed and rushed in the direction of the noise. An amazing sight met his eyes. About a hundred horses were standing tethered to the picket posts.

When he had recovered from his first shock the subaltern counted them and found that not a mount was missing. He also noticed that, although most of their halters bore the B.S.A.P. stamp, in some cases improvised ropes and riems had been used. It was only later that he realised that the animals could not possibly have stampeded, because they bore none of the cuts and abrasions which they would undoubtedly have done had they been frightened into breaking loose.

At the moment, however, his only desire was to find the man who had performed this miracle and had restored his self-respect. But the mild-mannered, soft-spoken stranger was nowhere to be found. All enquiries were met with a blank wall of reserve. For some reason no one seemed willing to acknowledge that they knew anything about the man. The barman would say, for example, " Oh 'im. 'E comes 'ere now and then. Don't know 'is name, but a bloke 'ere once called 'im 'Scotty.' Best leave 'im, son, to 'is own secrets. It'll pay you better that way."

A somewhat different type of escapade, which belongs to this period in Scotty's career, took place about this time. One afternoon he arrived at a farm house in the Free State and was invited inside. The farmer and his three grown-up sons were at home and while they were having coffee in the sitting-room Scotty noticed that there were a number of silver cups on the mantelshelf over the open hearth. The male members of the family must have been outstanding marksmen, because all these cups had been awarded for target

shooting, no mean achievement in those days when every young burgher was an excellent shot.

Almost inevitably the talk turned to the redoubtable Scotty and his amazing exploits. The family had of course no idea that they were actually entertaining the famous outlaw himself, as he had introduced himself to them under a false name.

At last one of the sons asked him whether he had ever met Scotty.

"Yes," he replied. "As a matter of fact, I know him quite well, and I think you're taking a chance leaving that silver there. (He pointed to the trophies on the shelf.) He's such a cunning rogue, I wouldn't put it past him to steal those cups from right under your noses."

The farmer scoffed at this. "I'd like to see how he'd manage it," he remarked.

"I'm sure, if he wanted to, he'd manage it all right," Scotty persisted.

"But that's impossible," another member of the family put in. "There's always one of us about."

"Look," said Scotty, "I'll show you. This is what he'd do." He took the cups carefully off the shelf and wrapped them in the table cloth. Then picking up the cloth he remarked, "Now watch me carefully."

With their eyes fixed intently on him, he walked slowly towards the door, opened it very deliberately, mounted his horse, and put the bundle on the saddle in front of them. While the family closely observed his every movement from the stoep, Scotty rode slowly round in a semi-circle. Suddenly he stopped and turned his horse's head as though he were going to retrace his steps.

"That's how I'd do it," he yelled, and before anyone understood what he was up to he wheeled round and dashed off. Only then did the farmer and his sons realise how they had been duped.

With angry yells they rushed for their own horses and set off in pursuit. But Scotty was on Lieutenant and he had sufficient start to elude his followers. Soon he had thrown them off his trail, and slowing down he considered what he should do with the cups.

He had only taken them as a joke and from the start he had no intention of keeping them. In his opinion stealing horses and cattle was one thing but robbing a farmer of the treasured trophies which his family had won for their shooting prowess was quite another matter.

Finally he made up his mind. At the next homestead which he passed he deposited the bundle and asked the farmer's wife to return it to its rightful owners as soon as possible.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ROBIN HOOD OF THE VELD

MANY of Scotty's horse-lifting and cattle-raiding exploits provide illustrations of the duality of his nature. Some of them depict him as a hard, pitiless, avaricious man, who cared nothing for the suffering and distress which he caused his numerous victims. Others present him in a much more favourable light, as a modern Robin Hood, whose kindness and benevolence to the poor, the weak and the under-privileged built up a reputation for chivalry among the simple farmers, who so often had to leave their wives and cattle quite unprotected while they rode off on commando or other official business. Here, for example, is a typical example of his generosity and philanthropy:

It was a hot summer's day in Bloemfontein and the town was crowded with people. A big cattle case was being heard and the landdrost's court was packed with farmers from the

surrounding districts. Scotty, who happened to be in the neighbourhood at the time, had also ridden in and was among the spectators. But he was interested not so much in the court proceedings as in the information which he had newly acquired, that the landdrost possessed a magnificent horse. About four o'clock that afternoon while the trial was still dragging on he left the courtroom and made his way towards the landdrost's house.

Slipping into the stables he led the horse out and, without anyone noticing what he was doing, mounted it and rode away. Soon afterwards the weather suddenly changed. Dark clouds gathered and before long the rain came pelting down. By the time Scotty was five or six miles out of town he was soaked, and as the storm showed no signs of abating he began to look round for somewhere he could shelter for the night.

His luck was in. In the distance a light gleamed, and making for it he reached a rather drab-looking homestead. He knocked on the

door. It was opened by a woman who seemed to be very hesitant about admitting him.

"Can you put me up for the night?" lie asked.

"I would like to," she replied, "but my husband isn't here. He made me promise not to admit any strangers while he was away and now I hear Scotty Smith's been seen in the neighbourhood."

In course of time the outlaw must have got used to this reaction to the mention of his name. He had acquired such a reputation among people, who did not know him that they regarded him as some horrible kind of ogre. Mothers would even discipline their recalcitrant children by threatening: "If you don't stop being naughty I'll tell Scotty Smith to ride away with you on his saddle, and then you'll never see your poor Mommy again." That this was apparently quite a common practice is corroborated by Mr G. Bergh. His mother grew up on the farm Witpoort, in the Wolmaransstad district of the Free State, and she told him that as a young girl

she had distinct recollections of Scotty's name being used in this way by exasperated parents in order to frighten their peevish offspring.

On this occasion Scotty laughed heartily. "You've got nothing to be afraid of," he said. "The scoundrel won't dare to show his face while I'm here. As a matter of fact I'm after Scotty myself, and the landdrost's lent me his own horse so that I can catch up with him. You must recognise it."

The woman was reassured, as much by Scotty's charm of manner as by the fact that she knew the animal well. "All right," she said. "I'll give you a room for the night. Take your horse round to the shed while I get the supper." After they had finished eating they sat talking for a while and Scotty soon noticed that his hostess was some-what sad and distrait. He asked her if there was anything worrying her. At first she would not say a word but eventually the story came out.

"I don't know what's going to happen," she cried. "I told my husband not to do it, but he wouldn't listen to me. He backed a bill for a friend for £200 and now the man's cleared out and we can't find him."

"Don't worry," the stranger comforted her, "and don't sit up for me. As soon as the weather clears I'll be off on Scotty's trail."

He thanked her for her hospitality and she retired. Some time afterwards the storm passed and Scotty got up. Taking a bundle of notes from his pocket he counted out £200. This he put under the plate on the table together with a note, "Best wishes from Scotty Smith." Then he rode off into the night.

Of course the old freebooter did not usually have so much money at his disposal nor was he always prepared to distribute it on such a generous scale. But he hated imposing on people and invariably paid for any hospitality shown him. On one occasion a couple of travellers were trekking by ox-wagon from Kimberley to

Mafeking. They had spent some nights on the veld and it was bitterly cold so they were only too glad to accept the hospitality of a farmer who invited them to spend the night at his homestead. During supper the talk turned to the ever-topical subject of Scotty Smith. The travellers immediately began to run the notorious horse thief down and to condemn his many misdeeds. To their amazement the farmer's wife abruptly silenced them. "Please don't talk like that," she exclaimed. "I won't hear anything bad against him in this house."

The men looked so surprised at this unexpected outburst that she told them the following story:

"One evening my husband was away and I was rather apprehensive when a stranger rode up to the house. He was, however, such a charming man that I knew I would be quite safe with him. He spent the night here and didn't speak much. The next morning, however, I received a shock. After thanking me for my hospitality he put a £5 note on the table and then turning to me said:

'I'm Scotty Smith. Tell your husband that in future your stock will be quite safe from that old cattle lifter.'

"That was some years ago," she concluded, "and he's certainly kept his promise, so you will understand the reason why we refuse to tolerate any evil talk about him in our presence."

In the early days, before the railway line from the south had reached the borders of the Orange Free State, travellers used to be conveyed by stage coach from the railhead at Colesberg to Bloemfontein. One of the stopping places on the route was the homestead of Mr I.M van Rooyen, a farmer in the Reddersburg district, and I am indebted to his son, Mr S.J. van Rooyen of Ermelo, for this interesting anecdote about Scotty. At his father's place the horses were changed for the penultimate stage of the dash to Bloemfontein, about forty miles away. As a result Mr Van Rooyen always had to maintain a large stable of first-class, well-trained horses.

On one occasion he was paying a visit to his father-in-law, Albertus Roux, who was farming in the Philippolis district, and he had to leave his wife alone on the farm with her small children. She was well aware, of course, that the fine stables which they kept would be a great temptation to horse thieves. Nor were her anxieties allayed when she heard that Scotty Smith was operating in the area, and that even the strongest padlocks and the most vigilant guards were no protection against his depredations.

Just as dusk was setting in one day she heard a horse galloping towards the house. With a sigh of relief she thought that it was her husband returning earlier than she had expected. When, however, the rider dismounted and knocked, she realised that it could not be Mr Van Rooyen. She opened the door and found a stranger outside. He greeted her courteously and, introducing himself as a Mr Fincham, asked for shelter for the night.

She took him to the stable, showed him where to feed his horse and then invited him inside.

After a while she confided to him her fears about Scotty and remarked that she was particularly nervous because of the team of eight selected horses waiting in the stable for the coach from Bloemfontein and also because she had a fairly large sum of money in the house. He listened attentively while she told him this and evidently appreciated the trust which she reposed in his honesty. Before retiring he assured her that she could sleep peacefully as he would see to it that no harm came to her possessions while he was there.

The next morning he thanked her for her hospitality, expressed the wish that her husband would soon return safely and then added: "I must now continue my journey. I'm Scotty Smith."

Mr David Cowan, a well-known citizen of Victoria West, had a somewhat more unpleasant experience at the hands of Scotty. Once, while he was on a visit to Beaufort West, a stranger turned up at his house and asked to be put up for the night. His wife, however, was dubious about taking him in for the usual reason. But when she

confided her fears to the stranger he laughed. "You needn't be afraid of Scotty Smith," he said. "He's never yet been known to harm a woman."

Mrs Cowan was still rather doubtful about what she should do, but eventually she gave him an outside room and took him his supper. The next morning she was up early and sent him some coffee. The girl brought it back.

"The Baas's gone," she told her missus. "But I found this letter on his bed."

"Thank you for the room and food," it ran. "I'm sorry but I've had to borrow two of your horses. When your husband returns, tell him that if he goes to the hotel in Beaufort West in ten days' time he'll find them there."

Mr Cowan did this and the horses were waiting for him, just as Scotty had promised.

And here is a story of one of his clashes with the police. Scotty had been caught horse lifting, had been taken to a small Free State town, and had been lodged in the jail there. Within a few hours, however, he had freed himself, and having

stolen a horse had made good his escape. A few nights later he arrived at the home of a poor farmer, who hospitably shared his scanty meal with him. During the course of the evening the man showed him a note which he had received from the district police officer, stating that Scotty Smith had escaped and that a reward of £100 was being offered for his recapture.

"I wish I could earn that reward," the farmer said sadly. "Things haven't gone too well with me lately and I could make good use of the money."

Scotty did not say a word in reply, but the following morning after breakfast he told his host to fetch his gun and accompany him to the town.

"Why should I do that?" asked the surprised Boer.

"Because I'm Scotty Smith," was the answer. "You said you wanted the reward for capturing me and you're going to get it."

The farmer vehemently protested, but as usual Scotty had his way. He forced his companion to ride into the town with him and to hand him over to the sheriff. The man was duly paid the £100 while Scotty was put in a cell. A few hours later the farmer rode sadly back to his farm. To his amazement, when he reached his homestead the first thing he saw was the irrepressible Scotty sitting on the front stoep waiting for him.

But it was when it came to befriending poor, lonely widows in distress that Scotty was really in his element. And poor, lonely widows in distress seem to have been so plentiful at that time in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal that aiding and succouring them could quite easily have become a full-time job.

Once, for example, Scotty arrived at a farm only to find that the owner had died a few days before and that the widow was in a state of great distress. It appeared that her brother-in-law held a large bond on the property and that he had decided to call it in. He was a hard man and it

meant nothing to him that she and her children would be left penniless.

Scotty did his best to comfort her. On his advice, she pleaded with her brother-in-law to postpone the foreclosure for a fortnight. Reluctantly he agreed to do this. Scotty then told the widow not to worry as he was sure that he could raise the necessary money.

He left her and collected some of his gang. Then he raided the bondholder's farm and stole a herd of cattle. These were driven to the Johannesburg stock market and sold there. A few days before the time was up, Scotty drove to the widow's house and gave her a bag of money. In it was enough to cover the bond. She refused, however, to take it, because he would not accept a receipt and so she knew he was giving it to her as a gift. At last he got tired of arguing.

"All right," he cried. "I don't want the money. I'll just leave it here and you can do what you like with it." Then he rode off.

Another version of this story is that the holder of the mortgage was no relation of his helpless victim. By a stroke of luck, on the very evening before the foreclosure was due, Scotty Smith happened to arrive at the farm. With his usual tact he had no difficulty in discovering why his hostess was so upset.

"How much is the bond?" he asked. "£400," she replied.

Without the slightest hesitation he dug his hand into his pocket, extracted a thick wad of notes and carefully counted out the required amount.

"Now," he told her, "when the man comes tomorrow to collect his money, pay him in full. Whatever you do, however, don't forget to obtain a proper receipt."

At first the widow demurred, and would not accept the gift.

"It's quite all right," Scotty assured her, "I certainly won't lose on the deal. You can be sure of that."

She did not understand what he meant, but eventually gave way and agreed to do what he said.

On the following morning when the holder of the mortgage arrived he found, to his chagrin, that the widow had the cash waiting for him. As there was nothing he could do about it he gave her the receipt and rode away. He had not gone far when an armed man appeared from some bushes and, holding him up at pistol point, robbed him of the money which he had just received.

That afternoon Scotty revisited the farm. The widow was very grateful to him, but when she asked him for his address so that she could eventually repay him he shook his head.

"Don't worry," he remarked with a grin, "the debt's already been settled. You don't owe me a penny. Goodbye, I'm Scotty Smith."

On still another occasion the scene of Scotty's chivalry and philanthropy was laid in the Transvaal. The owner of the farm, a widow in

poor circumstances, was terrified when a man on horseback arrived, because she only had a few cows left and if they were stolen she would be destitute. But she overcame her fears and gave him supper and a bed. The next morning when he left he thanked her for her kindness. For once, however, he failed to give her the usual present.

A few days after her guest's departure the woman was amazed to see an African driving twelve beautiful heifers into the kraal. When she asked him what he was doing he gave her a note which read: "Although you didn't know that it was me you were entertaining the other evening, this is a small present in return for your hospitality Scotty Smith."

Finally there is this striking account of the outlaw's benevolence to two distressed women in the Vryburg district in the early 'eighties. Not far from the town was a farm with a dilapidated hartebeeshuis on it. Scotty, however, in riding past the house noticed a magnificent grey stallion grazing near it. Immediately he coveted the animal and decided that he would not be

happy until it was in his possession. He therefore rode up to the door and knocked. It was opened by a pretty young girl, who invited him in to have the customary cup of coffee and rusks.

As he went inside, Scotty saw the girl's mother lying on a bed in the back room in a state of great distress. His interest was immediately aroused and in the course of conversation he asked the girl what was wrong.

"Meneer," she confided to him, "my father died recently, and there's a large debt outstanding to a Vryburg store. If it isn't paid within the next few weeks our farm will be sold and we'll be homeless and penniless."

Scotty thereupon drove the mother and daughter to town. He went to the bank and drew out the required amount. With this in his hand he walked into the shop, threw the money on the counter and shouted, "There's the sum owed you. Give me the receipt, and if I ever hear of you oppressing people like this again I'll come, back and put a couple of bullets into you."

After this he escorted the woman and her daughter back to the farm. "You know, madam," he confessed before he left, "I really came here to steal that grey stallion of yours. But don't worry, I'll arrange that nothing happens to your stock in the future. You see, I'm Scotty Smith."

There are many other stories of Scotty's sympathy towards and consideration for women, all of which bear the authentic South-African Robin Hood stamp - the lonely distressed woman on the farm; her reluctant hospitality to the stranger because of her dread of Scotty Smith, who is supposed to be in the neighbourhood; her confession of her fears and troubles to the sympathetic stranger; and the startling denouement, usually the next morning, when she discovers to her astonishment that she has been entertaining the noted outlaw unawares and that her distress has been dramatically relieved by his generosity.

When I was compiling this biography of Scotty's and I read account after account of how he had passed unrecognised and unsuspected

through the countryside, even when he was known to be in a particular area and everyone was on the lookout for him, I often wondered how he had managed to accomplish this feat. Gradually as I learnt more and more about him I was able to construct this composite picture of the methods he employed to avoid detection. The secret of his successful masquerading lay in the simplicity of the disguises which he affected. When engaged on one of his expeditions he seldom dressed any differently from his usual wont. Nor did he ever deign to wear the dyed wigs, thick glasses, false moustaches and other paraphernalia so beloved of the old-fashioned Victorian detective heroes.

Apart from darkening his hair occasionally, abstaining from shaving for a few days, or affecting a slight stoop, he usually made no change in his personal appearance. But he did possess a remarkable ability to alter the expression of his countenance so that he looked an entirely different person. In this transformation he was greatly helped by his reputation as

an outlaw. Such tales had been spread of his ferocity that people who met him for the first time were unable to believe that this genial, charming man with the smiling, benevolent face could really be the robber they expected to encounter.

On the one or two occasions when Scotty did adopt a distinctive disguise he gave every indication of being a really excellent actor.

Once, for example, when he was living in the Kalahari at Leitland's Pan, he played an extremely difficult role with great success. A friend of his, who had an interest in a mining venture in the Gordonias district, was disturbed by rumours that some very queer things were taking place at the mine. His suspicions were confirmed when he made an approach to the management. They were very secretive about the whole affair, would give him no information, and refused to allow him on the property. He therefore went to see Scotty, told him about his suspicions and sought his advice.

The latter thought for a moment or two and then made up his mind. "Give me a week," he said, "and I'll see what I can do."

The man was sceptical but about ten days later he again visited Scotty.

"Well," he greeted him, "did you manage to find out anything?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Was this what you wanted to know?" And he gave him a detailed account of what he had discovered.

His friend was surprised. "How on earth did you get that information?" he asked.

Scotty laughed. "I have my methods," he answered. "Just go along to the secretary of the company and ask him whether he recently employed a Basuto who enquired for a job and then after staying about a week suddenly disappeared."

His friend's curiosity was aroused. He went to see the secretary and questioned him about the Basuto who had left the mine. At first the

secretary refused to say anything, but after a while he admitted that Scotty's facts were correct. The latter could speak the Basuto language well, and so the only conclusion to which his friend could come was that he had disguised himself as an African and had worked as a labourer in the mine in order to find out what was taking place there.

CHAPTER NINE

NO JAIL CAN HOLD HIM

During his long career, Scotty Smith had innumerable brushes with the law. As a rule he got the better of these encounters, and even when the police were hard on his track he usually succeeded in outwitting them. After all, the odds were heavily in his favour. He was a magnificent rider; he was always well mounted; he knew every inch of the land in which he operated, and he was as full of guile and trickery as a jackal.

Even when arrested and safely bound, Scotty often managed to slip his bonds and disappear before he could be safely lodged in jail. Inevitably, however, he had some very narrow escapes, and there are many accounts of these.

On one occasion the Transvaal police really thought that they had cornered him. They had been on his trail for some hours and he had managed to outdistance them. They were not worrying unduly, because there had been very heavy rains and they knew that the frontier drift

for which Scotty was making was practically unfordable. When he reached the river he found that it was coming down in full spate. He had, however, provided himself with a pair of ox-bladders for just such an emergency. Hastily inflating them he tied them to a belt which he fastened round the horse's belly. He then rode into the swollen waters and emerged safely on the other side, just as his frustrated pursuers rode up to the opposite bank.

On another occasion Scotty was being escorted to jail by a sheriff. On the way he slipped his handcuffs and overpowered his captor. Next he took a needle and some thread out of his saddle bags and proceeded to sew the sheriff's trouser legs together and his sleeves to his coat. After this he glued the man's eyelids fast, using mimosa gum for the purpose, and then rode off with the two horses, leaving his helpless victim to get out of his predicament as best he could.

Many of the Cape police, in the course of their official duties, got to know Scotty Smith

very well. The late Clifford St Quintin was one of these, and I am indebted to his son, Mr C.P. St Quintin of Vryburg, for two very interesting encounters which his father had with the redoubtable outlaw.

It was while stationed at Taungs that Sgt St Quintin met Scotty for the first time. It was a stiflingly hot day and the policeman had been out on a long and tiring patrol. He was returning to his headquarters when, about ten miles from town, he saw a man sitting in the shade of a tree. The man had offsaddled and his horse was standing next to him.

"Hullo, sergeant," he called out, "are you going to Taungs? If you'll hang on for a bit I'll saddle up and accompany you."

Although Sgt St Quintin did not know it, the stranger was Scotty Smith, and for once he was riding a skinny old horse in obviously poor condition. Nor did the sergeant realise that the outlaw already had his eye on his own plump, well-bred police pony. All the way into town the

stranger kept up a running conversation, the theme of which was Scotty Smith, his sagacity, and how he could outwit the authorities any time he wanted to do so.

When they reached the outskirts of Taungs the sergeant's companion suggested an adjournment to the nearest hotel, so that they could quench their thirst. St Quintin was agreeable and soon they were sitting comfortably in the bar, trying to get cool.

Scotty ordered two beers and then all of a sudden seemed to be in a hurry. He quickly downed his drink, rose, and strode towards the door. Holding it open he addressed the policeman:

"Well, good-bye, sergeant," he cried. "Thanks for your very enjoyable company, but I'm afraid you can say good-bye to that nice horse of yours. My need's greater than yours."

With that he slammed the door shut and, leaping on the police pony, made off. St Quintin rushed out after him but by that time Scotty was

already disappearing round the corner of the hotel.

It must have given the sergeant a good deal of satisfaction when some years later he was able to arrest the outlaw on a charge of horse stealing. At the time Sgt St Quintin was stationed at Barkly West. One day a man galloped frantically up to the police post to report that Scotty Smith had ridden off with some of his horses. Hoping to catch the thief red-handed St Quintin immediately selected the best horse at the police camp and gave chase.

The sergeant had no idea which way Scotty had gone but had to trust to luck that he would choose the same direction. He was fortunate because soon after setting out he met some Africans who put him on the right track. Realising that he would never be able to catch up with the robber he decided to take a short cut. After a while he met a transport rider and asked him whether he had seen Scotty.

"No," the man replied. "He hasn't passed here yet."

St Quintin then decided to lie in wait for him. He therefore took the saddle and bridle off his horse and tied it to the wagon. Then he climbed under the tent and closed the flaps.

It was not long before he heard the sound of galloping hoofs. Presently they stopped and he heard someone talking to the transport rider. Lifting the tent flap slightly he peered out. There, as large as life, was Scotty with the stolen horses. It is characteristic of the outlaw that even when he was being pursued he could not resist the sight of a first-class steed. The sergeant's mount was an excellent one, and so he had delayed his getaway in order to bargain with the transport man for it.

At this stage St Quintin jumped out of the wagon and grabbed the horse thief by the arm. "You're my prisoner," he announced.

Scotty took his arrest in good part. "You've got me all right, sergeant," he stated, with some

attempt at a grin, but just see how long you can hold me."

St Quintin escorted him back to Barkly West and locked him up in the local cells. Scotty, however, was as good as his word. The next morning the jailer noticed a hole in the side of the stone wall of the jail. Not only was the prisoner gone but he had taken one of the best police horses with him, and although the alarm was immediately raised, Scotty had completely vanished.

Like so many other men who had been tricked by the outlaw, Sgt St Quintin bore him no malice and in fact always spoke of Scotty Smith with the greatest respect and affection.

Another man who had a very interesting encounter with Scotty Smith was Mr David Eadie. Mr Eadie, who was the magistrate of Upington at the time, was on an official visit to a remote part of his district, and had arranged to meet his police escort at a particular spot on the veld. When he arrived at the rendezvous the

sergeant and his party were already waiting for him. To his surprise Mr Eadie saw that they had a prisoner, no less a person in fact than Scotty Smith himself. The sergeant was jubilant at having captured so important a prize and he was taking no chance of its slipping out of his grasp. Not only had he handcuffed Scotty but he had fastened his arms round the stem of a tree, thus making escape almost impossible.

Mr Eadie, although he knew all about Scotty's reputation as an escaper, was revolted by what he considered this inhumane method of treating the prisoner, and ordered the sergeant to fetter him in a more seemly way. The police officer was most reluctant to do this. Submitting to higher authority, however, he at length gave way and Scotty was handcuffed in the customary manner.

That night the sergeant's forebodings came true. As soon as everyone was fast asleep Scotty slipped his bonds and made his getaway. The next morning, when the escape was discovered, the policeman was beside himself with rage. He

had been looking forward to gaining considerable kudos from his valuable capture and now the bird had flown. He naturally blamed Mr Eadie and the return journey was completed under considerable restraint. Immediately Upington was reached the sergeant, in high dudgeon, reported to his superior officer how the magistrate had aided and abetted the escape of a dangerous criminal!

As a result a departmental enquiry was held into the circumstances surrounding Scotty's disappearance. "But," as Mr Eadie's son, Mr W.V. Eadie of Benoni, told me, "far from my father being censured by the authorities for his action, he was praised for his humanitarian sentiments and his conduct was held up to the police officers as an example of how they should comport themselves under even the most provocative circumstances."

And here is another example of the genius Scotty so often displayed for escaping from custody. He had been arrested by the Cape police, and was being sent under a guard of four

mounted constables to the Kimberley jail. They were unable to reach their destination before dark and so had to spend the night on the veld. While they were sitting round the camp fire, one of the men produced a bottle of brandy. Scotty was their guest, although an unwilling one, and so as a matter of courtesy the bottle was passed to him first.

This was what he had hoped would happen. As usual he was carrying a number of drugs taken from his veterinary chest, and this was one of the occasions on which they came in very handy.

He poured out a generous tot and then passed the bottle to the next man. But in the flickering shadows cast by the campfire no one noticed that he had slipped some knock-out drops into the brandy. The men downed their drinks and the bottle went round again. Scotty refilled his glass and put it on the ground next to him. And then a most unfortunate accident happened. Turning to speak to one of the escort he caught the glass with his elbow and knocked it over. As the bottle

was empty by this time, his second drink could not be replaced.

After a while the men began to feel drowsy and one after another they dropped off to sleep. Before following their example, however, the sergeant in charge took the precaution of fettering Scotty's wrist to his.

The prisoner waited until he could tell from their heavy breathing that his captors were well under the influence of the drug. Then he quietly released himself and rising to his feet secured each policeman's wrists with his own handcuffs. Next he selected a horse, stampeded the others and rode away. The sun was high in the heavens the next morning before the effects of the drug wore off and the members of the escort awoke. By that time Scotty was many miles away.

Of course not all Scotty's escapes were due to his own ingenuity and quick thinking. Fortune favours the brave, and sometimes he enjoyed the most amazing luck.

Take for example one of the occasions on which the police were hot on his trail. It had been a long, relentless chase, and although he had eventually thrown off his pursuers he realised that he could not go much further as his horse was completely exhausted. In the nick of time he came to a homestead. The woman owner readily agreed to give him shelter for the night, and showed him where he could sleep in a rondavel adjoining the main building. Scotty fed and watered his horse and then concealed it in a clump of trees. After this he rolled himself up in his blanket and was soon fast asleep.

About midnight he heard the sound of approaching horses and a few minutes later the door opened and two policemen came in. They saw the recumbent form in the corner of the hut and one of them remarked to his companion, "I wonder who that fellow is. Perhaps we'd better find out."

His half-section yawned. "Oh, don't let's bother about it now. We're both dead tired. We'll investigate him in the morning.

When morning came, however, it was too late. Both the fellow and the policemen's horses had disappeared. Even when the authorities did manage to lodge Scotty safely in prison he usually had the last laugh, because as the Rev. John Mackensie diplomatically put it, "He didn't always wait for a formal discharge."

Scotty once gave a humorous demonstration of the truth of his oft-repeated boast that there was not a jail in the country that could hold him. The new prison at Vryburg had just been erected and on the opening day the whole town turned out to see the building which added so much to the attractions of the place. Among the interested spectators was Scotty, who may be said to have had a personal interest in the matter. The town folk were very proud of their jail but no one was prouder than the man in charge. He was enlarging on its escape-proof qualities when he saw the outlaw. He immediately invited him to come forward and ceremoniously showed him round the premises, pointing out the cells and other modern amenities.

"Well, Scotty," he said after they had completed their tour of inspection, "you'd better not get put in here, because this's one jail you'll never get out of."

Scotty studied the building in silence for a minute or two before contemptuously replying, "It wouldn't take me more than three days to escape from this hen coop."

The jailer was extremely annoyed at this insult to his impregnable fortress.

"I'll bet you £5 you can't do it," he rejoined. "Right," Scotty replied. "I'll accept your bet."

He allowed himself to be taken down to a cell and locked in. In this way he became the jail's first prisoner. Of course the news of the wager spread like wildfire through the little town and crowds turned up to inspect the famous horse thief and to issue side bets on the outcome. This went on for three days, but although he took extra precautions, on the morning of the fourth day when the jailer went to visit his prisoner he found the cell empty. Scotty had been as good as

his word. The following morning he returned to collect his money. The jailer paid up. All his efforts, however, to induce Scotty to tell him how he had managed to escape failed. The laugh was definitely on him and he took a long time to live it down. For some months his fellow citizens made a practice of arriving at the prison and innocently asking its custodian whether they could see Scotty!

CHAPTER TEN

STAND AND DELIVER

In general Scotty did not look upon his various breaches of the law as being very heinous crimes. Rather he regarded them as exciting games, in which he pitted his brains and ability against those of his opponents. His attitude towards I.D.B. is particularly illuminating as it throws a good deal of light on his peculiar code of morals.

"Diamonds, he liked," his friend Mrs Schutz told me, "because he always said that they were put there by Almighty God for everyone, not

only for the rich." He apparently had a somewhat similar belief about other people's horses, cattle and property.

The fact that very often his victims were prepared to shoot him on sight only added spice to the particular adventure in which he was engaged. There are some men who thrive on dangerous living, and Scotty was undoubtedly one of these. When his old adversary, Sgt Childs of the Cape police, once asked him why he had persisted in leading the kind of life which he did, he replied, "Oh, just for the excitement of it." It was perhaps partly for this reason that, in the middle of his career, he added highway robbery on a fairly extensive scale to his repertoire of depredations.

During the latter part of the twentieth century the opening up of the Griqualand West diamond fields and the Witwatersrand gold mines led to a tremendous expansion of traffic between Cape Town, Kimberley and Johannesburg. In the absence of rail facilities to cater adequately for this new business, enterprising men like the

Gibsons and the Zeederburgs instituted their famous coaching services. By 1886 Gibson's Red Star Line was despatching an average of fourteen coaches a week each way between Kimberley and Pretoria and doing the distance in the record time of fifty hours. In addition to travellers, these coaches carried a wide variety of goods to Griqualand West and the Witwatersrand, and on their return trips their freight often comprised extremely valuable cargoes of gold bullion and diamonds.

As a result an era was ushered in reminiscent of the days of Dick Turpin and his fellow gentlemen of the road in England. On more than one occasion the imperious demand, "Stand and deliver," rang across the veld, as masked bandits dashed out from cover flourishing their revolvers, while the startled coach drivers made frantic attempts to escape and the trembling passengers clung to their swaying seats.

Among the most prominent gentlemen of the veld during the period 1880-1890 were Scotty Smith, Jack O'Reilly, "Wilde" Jacobs, and two

ruffians who worked in partnership and were known as Mick and Mays. The favourite sphere of operations of all these highway robbers was the stretch of road between Johannesburg and Kimberley. Scotty is reputed to have held up both the Gibson and the Zeederburg coaches in this area. Unfortunately, evidence of these affairs is very scanty. I have, however, managed to trace the details of two of these incidents in both of which, strangely enough, the hold-ups were anything but successful, and Scotty and his gang certainly came off second best.

Attacks on the coaches had become so persistent that the mine owners were forced to adopt the most elaborate measures to safeguard their valuable freight and to outwit the raiders. Once near Christiana, for example, Scotty and his men stopped the Johannesburg-Kimberley coach and seized five boxes, conspicuously labelled "Gold Bullion." The chests were extremely heavy and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the bandits managed to carry them to the Vaal River, where they buried

them in the soft sand on its banks. They waited for some weeks for the hue and cry to die down, and then dug up the boxes and opened them. To their chagrin they found that they were filled with large boulders.

On the second occasion the robbers were similarly duped. At the time Scotty and some of his friends were prospecting for alluvial diamonds in the bed of the Vaal River at Bloemhof. One of them had ridden north to Machadodorp; where a gold strike had been reported, only to find that the richness of the new fields had been grossly exaggerated. He returned to Bloemhof just ahead of the stage coach from Johannesburg. In spite of the failure of his mission he arrived at the camp in a state of great excitement.

"They've got a valuable consignment of gold on board the coach," he informed Scotty. "It's in a large, chest, strengthened with bands of hoop iron, and it's stowed under the driver's seat."

The diamond prospecting had been going very badly and the syndicate was practically bankrupt. Scotty therefore decided to take immediate action. As it was a bitterly cold night he told his accomplices to go into the hotel and to stand the driver and the guard as many drinks as they could, while the horses were being changed.

He himself remained outside. As soon as he saw that the coach had been left unattended he went over to it and grabbed the box. It was extremely heavy and he had quite a tussle getting it out of the coach and into the surrounding darkness.

After a while the driver and the conductor came out and drove off without noticing that the box had been removed. As soon as they were gone Scotty and his men carried their prize down to the empty bed of the Vaal River. It took them some time, however, to break open the chest as it was so tightly bound. At last by hurling large rocks at it they managed to smash it.

When Scotty reached this stage in the story he always used to pause for dramatic effect. "And so," he would conclude, "we crowded round, expecting our fortunes to be made. But all the box contained was lead samples."

In his book, *Stage Coach Dust*, H. Klein gives a vivid account of how Scotty Smith once had the audacity to steal a complete team of horses.

The Gibson brothers very often drove their own coaches and on this particular occasion Alexander Gibson was in charge during the journey between De Aar and Kimberley. Occupying the corner box seat on the roof was a tall, well-built man, dressed in rough cord riding breeches and leather leggings. He was quiet, unassuming, courteous, intellectual looking, and obviously a gentleman. Moreover he had a way with him and even induced the driver to let him take the reins for long stretches at a time.

As the panting horses pulled up at each stopping place he would jump down, examine them carefully and pass the most flattering

remarks about their appearance and breeding. It was obvious to the other travellers that the team, twelve fine chestnuts, had made a great impression on him. What they did not know was that the charming stranger was Scotty Smith.

That night, some time after dark had fallen, they reached Magersfontein, the end of the stage. Here the horses were outspanned and, having been replaced by a fresh team, were driven to a dam about a thousand yards away, preparatory to being watered and rubbed down before being fed and stabled.

In the meantime the tired crew and passengers had adjourned to the local inn to refresh themselves with coffee and sandwiches. Scotty, however, had excused himself on the pretext that he wanted to stretch his legs.

"I'll walk on ahead," he told the driver. "Just pick me up on the road."

After a while the coach set off again, but although it was a bright, moonlight night and the crew and passengers kept a sharp look-out there

was no sign of their fellow traveller. The driver therefore made frequent stops and the guard blew his horn repeatedly. There was no response; however, and at last they desisted and drove on to Kimberley, which they reached about eleven o'clock.

The case of the missing passenger was immediately reported to the head office, but it was not until the following day that some light was thrown on the mystery of his disappearance. Shortly after noon a stable boy arrived post-haste from Magersfontein with the startling intelligence that the whole chestnut team had vanished.

Expert trackers were at once called in, but all their efforts proved to be fruitless. Then, about a fortnight later, two of the missing horses were recognised pulling a cart, driven by a local farmer. There was no doubt about the identification, as each animal had on its left hip a star surrounded by a circle, which was the Gibson brothers' registered brand mark. It now came out that the thief had bartered the horses to the farmer in exchange for a buggy and harness.

The rest of the team were subsequently traced to a Bloemfontein auction sale, but none of them were ever recovered by their rightful owners. The latter, however, had the dubious consolation of learning that the man who had robbed them was none other than the redoubtable Scotty Smith.

This story has an interesting, if somewhat unexpected, sequel. About three years later, Alexander Gibson and his uncle, Fred Gibson, were staying at the Vryburg Hotel. During breakfast one morning a man walked in whose face seemed vaguely familiar to Alex. Suddenly it struck him who it was. Nudging Fred he whispered, "There's the chap who pinched our twelve chestnuts at Magersfontein."

Fred Gibson immediately got up, sauntered over to Scotty, spoke a few quiet words to him, and then brought him to their table. Alex wasted no time beating about the bush.

"You're Scotty Smith, I believe."

"Yes," was the unabashed reply, "and you're Gibson of Gibson's Red Star coaches, aren't you?"

"What about those twelve chestnuts of ours you jumped?"

"You're right, Gibson," Scotty admitted, "I stole the team that night at Magersfontein, but I've given up that game. I'm now living a respectable life close by as a farmer, and I'm doing fairly well. If you will trust me and not make a fuss about this matter, I'll see that you get the equivalent of those twelve horses by noon tomorrow. I can only give you my word as security and my hand in good faith."

The Gibsons agreed to accept Scotty's offer and shook hands with him. The next morning the horses were delivered to their stables. They were accompanied by a young Bushman with a note, which displays Scotty's delightful sense of humour and his fine appreciation of irony."

"Dear Gibsons," it ran, "Receive from boy, Stompneus (blunt nose), 14 horses, 1 saddle and 1 bridle as promised, which I hope will square your account. The extra animals, saddle and bridle will make up for the lack of quality as compared with those I borrowed from you.

"If you can give Stompneus something to do I shall be obliged; he is a good tracker and odd-job boy, but although I have tried all I can, he cannot be cured of cattle stealing. If he cannot steal anybody else's cattle, he takes mine.

Thank you,
Scotty Smith."

Some of these daring feats of robbery under arms sound very picturesque and romantic. There was, however, nothing either picturesque

or romantic about Scotty Smith's next exploit, one which was to involve him in his most serious clash with the law and was to end disastrously for him. In fact the only good thing that can be said about it is that when he was caught he accepted his fate philosophically and for once made no attempt to escape his punishment. The affair was certainly disgraceful enough and shows Scotty in an extremely unfavourable light.

It centres round Oliphantsfontein, a small village not far from Kimberley in the Boshoff district. A number of disreputable characters were involved. At the time Oliphantsfontein was the headquarters of a flourishing and highly lucrative diamond-stealing and illicit diamond-buying racket.

The ringleader in this illegal practice was a merchant, Thomas Welford, and he was in partnership with a man named Gustav Herman and his younger brother, Max Herman. Welford, who was a man of property, owned a house at Oliphantsfontein known as the Homestead and another in the Malay Camp at Kimberley. At

both these places he had given the two Hermans a room so that they could live there and be in close touch with him. The syndicate operated on a large scale and employed a number of runners and other agents, whose function it was to buy stolen diamonds on its behalf, carry them into the Colony and dispose of them there at huge profits to suitable clients.

Although Welford and the two Hermans possessed no licences of any kind, either as prospectors, diggers, brokers, agents or buyers, they did a big business in illicit stones and their turnover was considerable. But in spite of the fact that thousands of pounds worth of diamonds passed through their hands every month Welford was not satisfied. He decided to add to his ill-gotten gains by robbing one of his colleagues and fellow I.D.B. merchants. This was Sam Kemp, as big a rogue, if possible, as Thomas Welford himself and a man who acted as chief runner to Sam Weil, another shady Oliphantsfontein character. Welford put his scheme to his partners and they readily agreed to co-operate.

Max, however, only played a very minor role in the events which followed.

Having selected his victim, Welford looked round for someone to carry out the actual robbery, as he had no intention of risking his own skin in so hazardous an undertaking. He had not far to look, and this is where Scotty comes into the picture. Scotty happened to be on a visit to Kimberley and had struck up a great friendship with a local police sergeant, Arthur Gerald Leigh. They seemed to be kindred spirits and spent much time together in the diamond city's numerous canteens and bars.

Now, operating in the area at the time were the two notorious footpads, thieves and highwaymen, Mick and Mays. The Griqualand West authorities were having a great deal of trouble with them and were particularly anxious to lay their hands on Mays. A warrant for his arrest on a charge of theft had been issued and Leigh had been assigned the task of apprehending him.

As soon as Welford, who could be very obliging when it suited his purpose, heard what the sergeant was doing he lent him a cart and horses to facilitate his investigations. These, however, proved unsuccessful. Leigh therefore returned the outfit to Welford at his house in the Malay Camp. It was then that Welford made the rather significant remark, "I'm surprised, you know, that a man of your ability should waste his time as you are doing. Why don't you follow Mays' example?"

"I don't understand what you mean," Leigh answered, but he appeared very interested all the same in what Welford was saying.

The latter was quick to realise this and to take advantage of it. "I've got a scheme on hand," he continued, "and I need the help of two reliable men. How about you and your pal, Scotty Smith, coming in with me?"

Leigh made no direct reply, but Welford could see that he had taken the bait, and it was not long before he began giving him small sums

of money, ranging in value from £5 to £10, which he was instructed to share with Scotty.

Nothing further happened for some time, and it was really Scotty who finally forced Welford's hand. Life in the city began to pall on him and, as the lure of the desert called, he grew increasingly restless. One day he bluntly informed Leigh that he was leaving.

"I've had enough of Kimberley," he remarked, "I'm quitting."

For his own sake it was a great pity that he did not carry out his intention, but had he done so it would have upset all Welford's plans. Leigh immediately realised this. He went to Welford and told him that Scotty was on the point of returning to Bechuanaland. Welford was alarmed. "Persuade him not to go," he urged. "Tell him I have something much better for him, and I'll pay all the expenses.

Welford now decided to put the scheme he had worked out into operation with the least possible delay. Fate played into his hands

because he was informed that Kemp was leaving shortly on a trip to Port Elizabeth with about £3,000 worth of stolen diamonds in his possession.

He therefore arranged a meeting with Gustav Herman, Scotty and Leigh at Rowley's Oriental Canteen in the Malay Camp. Here, and at a subsequent meeting at the Royal Hotel, where Scotty was staying, a blueprint of the robbery was drawn up and the plan of campaign was worked out in detail.

It is perhaps significant, in view of the poor showing which Scotty makes in this affair, that for once he was a mere tool, carrying out the instructions of another man. The master crook was Thomas Welford and, like his prototypes in modern criminal fiction, he took good care to see that he personally ran no risks and that the others pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for him.

The first step had been cleverly planned. Gustav had offered to drive Kemp in his cart to the railhead at Colesberg. This was a cunning

move as it ensured that the conspirators would know the precise time that Kemp set out and the exact route which he was taking. Then at a selected spot Scotty and Leigh, suitably disguised, were to hold up the cart and seize the diamonds.

Further details were then discussed. In order that he could participate freely in the scheme, Leigh was to obtain eight days' leave, and to remove suspicion from Herman a mock assault was to be made on him. It was decided that the police sergeant should handle this while Scotty dealt with Kemp. Welford also agreed to buy the diamonds back once they had been secured, and after all expenses had been paid the proceeds were to be divided equally among the four men. Finally it was arranged that Herman was to let Leigh and Scotty know immediately Kemp had made up his mind to set out.

In view of what subsequently happened, it is interesting to note that at the final meeting Scotty asked Herman, who knew Kemp well, whether

he would offer any resistance when he was attacked.

"No," Herman replied emphatically.

"If he does," Scotty threatened, "I'll shoot him."

Not to be outdone, Leigh boasted, "If anybody shoots, I will do so too."

On Saturday, 17 January 1885, Scotty was playing billiards at Wilson's Hotel, when Gustav Herman arrived with the news that he and Sam Kemp were leaving from Stephen's Hotel, Oliphantsfontein, that very afternoon at two o'clock.

Scotty at once sent a note to Leigh telling him to meet him at the Royal Hotel, where he would provide him with a horse, complete with saddle and bridle. He then had a quick dinner and a little later picked up Leigh at the Fox and Hounds Hotel in Dutoitspan. Rather injudiciously, he now quite openly went into a nearby store and purchased two dark hats and a couple of yards of black crepe. He did, however, take

the precaution of telling Leigh to keep about a hundred yards ahead of him, in case anyone should see them leave the town together.

After a fairly long ride they reached the place they had agreed on. Here they chose a spot behind some bushes, which not only sheltered them from sight but gave them a good view of the road along which their intended victim would have to travel.

In the meantime, as had been arranged, a small cavalcade consisting of three carts set out from Stephen's Hotel. In the first conveyance, driven by Gustav Herman, was Sam Kemp himself. In the second was Thomas Welford and Max Herman, and in the third, Samuel Weil.

Samuel Weil had, of course, nothing to do with the conspiracy to rob Kemp. In fact, if he had only known it, he was destined to be his fellow victim. Some time before, he had bought a parcel of diamonds weighing 697 carats from Welford for £1,100. These he had entrusted to Kemp with instructions to deliver them to a

relative of his, Julius Weil, in Cape Town. It was only natural, therefore, that he should have turned out to speed Kemp safely on his way.

The latter had prepared himself well for his journey. Besides £30 in expense money, some rugs, spare clothing and other items of luggage, which he would require on his long trip to the Cape, he had thoughtfully provided himself with a loaded revolver. This was a very necessary precaution as, in addition to the parcel he was carrying for Weil, he also had in his possession diamonds of his own weighing nearly fourteen hundred carats. These he had done up in half a dozen separate packets, which he had secreted in a body-belt round his waist.

After leaving Stephen's Hotel the three men first drove to the Homestead. There all of them except Kemp went into the house. About fifteen minutes later they came out again and Welford put on a side-show which was meant to impress Weil with the genuineness of Herman's mission. He ostentatiously handed his partner a parcel, done up in a red handkerchief, and told him to

ensure that it was safely lodged in a Cape Town bank. Weil immediately wanted to see the contents, but Herman resolutely refused to show them to him. It was perhaps just as well for his peace of mind, because in reality the handkerchief contained not diamonds but gravel and small pebbles.

Herman then climbed into the driver's seat and, waving farewell to the others, drove off in the direction of Saltpansdrift. After a while Kemp began to exhibit some signs of uneasiness. "Gustav," he pointed out, "I'm sure you're making a mistake. Aren't you taking the wrong road?"

"Don't worry," Herman rejoined. "I know what I'm doing. This is the right road."

Herman now began to slow down as he wanted to give his fellow plotters plenty of time to get into position for the attack. But this tardy progress naturally increased Kemp's nervousness.

"Hit up the horses, Gustav," he urged his companion. At this rate we'll never reach Colesberg."

"The horses are tired," Herman replied. "I think we should outspan and rest them for a while."

"No," Kemp shouted. "We must get on. Whip them up. Whip them up." Herman, however, ignored these exhortations and continued to waste as much time as possible.

About three quarters of an hour after leaving the Homestead they passed a lonely farm house. This was the residence of Mr H.C. Geyer, a farmer who was later destined to give important evidence against the hold-up men. Half a mile further on was a thick clump of bush and it was here that Scotty and Leigh were lying in wait for their prey.

It is extremely difficult to obtain a clear-cut picture of the actual hold-up and of the events which followed it, because at the subsequent trial all four accused, as well as their victim, gave the

most conflicting accounts of what really took place. The following is, however, a fairly accurate description of what happened.

When Scotty and his confederate first saw the approaching cart it must have been about six hundred yards away. This was the signal for them to assume their disguises. They therefore donned their dark hats, wrapped scarves round their mouths and pulled black veils over their faces. In order to camouflage their appearance still further, Scotty had slipped on a pair of white trousers and a red-striped shirt, while Sgt Leigh had pulled light moleskin trousers over his usual attire.

The two bandits waited until the cart was about sixty yards away. Then, armed with revolvers and brandishing stout sticks, they broke cover and rode hard towards it. As soon as he saw the highwaymen racing towards the cart Samuel Kemp let out a startled yell.

"Look, Gustav," he cried. "There are two men coming at us. Whip up the horses ! Whip up the horses! "

"They're Mick and Mays," Herman bawled, trying to put his companion off the scent, and then instead of attempting to escape he deliberately jerked on the reins and brought the cart to a dead stop.

"Out revolvers," Kemp commanded - a command which Herman of course did not obey. His companion, however, who was the only man to come well out of this unsavoury affair, drew his own gun and prepared to sell his life dearly.

"If you come any nearer," he shouted at the horsemen, " I'll shoot."

This unexpected display of courage took the conspirators completely by surprise as they had expected at most a token resistance. They kept their heads, however and, as previously arranged, Leigh pretended to assault Herman while Scotty got ready to deal with Kemp.

Riding up to his side he called out: "Hands up! If you give in, no harm'll come to you."

"No hands up," was Kemp's spirited reply.

"If you let me come close to you," Scotty persisted, "I won't hurt you."

"If you don't keep back," Kemp warned, "I'll fire." And he was as good as his word. Without further preliminaries he raised his revolver and, aiming at Scotty's stomach, pulled the trigger. The old outlaw had had many narrow escapes during his lifetime but this must have been one of his closest shaves. Fortunately for him, however, the gun misfired.

Scotty immediately jumped off his horse and ran to the back of the cart. Quite an exchange of shots followed. Kemp fired twice and missed, while Scotty and Leigh both took a pot shot at him, without any luck. The combatants then came to close quarters. Running round the side of the cart, Leigh grabbed hold of Herman and hurled him to the ground. The latter played his role well. He and the sergeant rolled over and

over in the dust in deadly combat. Leigh soon gained the upper hand in, this simulated fight, and wrested from his opponent the dummy packet of precious stones which he had on his person.

In the meantime Scotty and Kemp had also come to grips. Scotty struck his opponent brutally over the head with his kerie, and then delivered another smashing blow which caught him on the arm. As though this were not enough, Leigh now also joined in the assault on the unfortunate Kemp, and slashed at him with his stick. Kemp fell back into the cart. But the fight had not yet been knocked out of him. He was trying to raise his revolver for another shot at his assailants when Scotty gave him a resounding crack on the wrist, which made him drop his weapon. Scotty and Leigh then grabbed hold of him and threw him to the ground.

"Help, Gustav! Help! "the sorely stricken man cried to his false friend, who had pretended to run away and was now standing a short distance

off in the veld. Herman then came back to the cart but of course made no attempt to aid him.

As their victim lay half-unconscious on the ground, Leigh searched him and removed his body-belt.

"That's it," Herman whispered. "That's it. The diamonds are in there," and so Leigh stuffed the belt into the bosom of his shirt.

Kemp was now lying perfectly still and his attackers thought that he was dead. The indomitable diamond runner, however, had not yet shot his bolt. Suddenly coming round, he jumped up and once more grappled with Scotty. A vicious punch to his left eye from Scotty's fist again knocked him down, and this time he mercifully remained unconscious for a long time.

The fight was at last over and the three conspirators, after searching the cart and removing some of Kemp's personal belongings, also pocketed the other packet of diamonds and the money which he was carrying on his person. At this stage, much to their surprise, Kemp

suddenly staggered to his feet and, in a semi-conscious state, clambered into the cart. Herman got in beside him and turning the horses in a wide semicircular sweep drove off in the direction of Kimberley. In the meantime Scotty and Leigh had also mounted. As the cart sped on its way, Leigh in a last gesture of bravado fired a couple of parting shots over the horses' heads.

Herman made for Mr Geyer's farm and when he reached it he unceremoniously dumped the badly battered victim of the assault there before returning to Oliphantsfontein.

Samuel Kemp awoke a few hours later, covered with bruises and with his face bloody and swollen, to find himself lying on the floor of the farm storeroom. About midnight, Sam Weil and a man named Charlie Bannau arrived to fetch him and took him back to Oliphantsfontein with them. In spite of the rough treatment he had received, Kemp had not been seriously injured. After a week in bed, he had almost fully recovered from his trying ordeal. One of the first things he did was to report the matter to Captain

Albrecht, the commandant of police at Kimberley, who immediately opened an investigation into the crime.

Meanwhile Scotty and Leigh had ridden back to the clump of trees where they had lurked before the attack. They now removed their crepe veils and dark hats and slipped off the clothes which they had used as a disguise. Realising that they must get rid of this evidence as soon as possible, they rolled them into a bundle and then rode some distance across the veld, looking for a suitable hiding place. At last they found what they wanted - an antbear hole. Here they dismounted and, scooping out the entrance, stuffed the incriminating bundle into the hole and covered it with sand.

Well pleased with themselves they returned to Kimberley at top speed, taking care to separate as they approached the town. Scotty stopped at his hotel, while Leigh went straight to Welford's house in the Malay Camp.

The four conspirators had arranged to meet at the Oriental Canteen and so, after a wash and brush up, Scotty proceeded there. He found Welford already waiting for him. A little later, Herman burst into the bar in a state of the greatest apparent agitation.

"I've been robbed," he wailed in a voice of simulated anguish. "Those scoundrels, Mick and Mays, have robbed me." Then catching sight of Smith he added, "Oh Scotty, won't you help me?" and he apparently burst into tears.

One of the bar loungers, a man named Joe Levy, who had evidently been primed for the job, immediately shouted, "Don't worry, Scotty Smith'll catch the thief all right. And if he does, I'll give him £50."

This was the cue for Thomas Welford to play his part. "I'll add £150 to that amount," he magnanimously announced.

But whether this crude display of histrionics had any effect in diverting suspicion from the real culprits is extremely doubtful.

At this stage Sgt Leigh also arrived and he and Scotty had a few drinks together. They still had the stolen diamonds on them and, rather belatedly, realising the danger of this they now decided to hide them in case they were searched. They therefore went outside, put the precious stones in a handkerchief and buried them next to the fence which ran round the Kimberley Mine. Then they went back to Wilson's Canteen to refresh themselves. After a while Scotty expressed anxiety about the safety of the gems and so Leigh returned to the fence and retrieved them. This time he hid them in a rubbish heap near the police barracks.

On the following morning Scotty and Leigh were up at five o'clock. Their first task was to fetch the diamonds, after which they hired a cab and set out for the Homestead. There they met Welstead and the two Hermans. Going inside they sorted the diamonds, classified and weighed them, and Welford estimated that they were worth about £3,000. They now divided these into three packets and entrusted them to Herman for

safe keeping. It had been decided that he, Scotty and Leigh should take them to Port Elizabeth for sale. And so they set out for Philippolis in a cart, driven by a Malay named Turk.

Thomas Welford, as usual choosing the safe course, remained behind, but before they left he gave them £50 for their expenses. They arrived at Philippolis safely and then hired another driver to take them to Colesberg. They spent the night there at the Free State Hotel, all sleeping in one room and again taking the opportunity of re-sorting the gems and repacking them in three parcels. One of these was given to Leigh and the other two to Herman.

A day or two later they went down to the station to catch the nine o'clock train to Naauwpoort, where they hoped to get a connection to Port Elizabeth. When the train came in Leigh found a second class compart-ment. "Come in here, Scotty," he shouted.

It was sheer bad luck that of all the compartments on the train he should have chosen

the one in which Samuel Lorrimer was sitting, because Lorrimer was a railway detective. Scotty at once recognised him and whispered the information to Leigh. Wanting to make quite certain, the latter turned to their fellow traveller and asked him straight out, "Are you a detective?"

"Yes," was the discomfiting reply.

At the same time Lorrimer, who had heard that the notorious Mays was wanted for a recent murder in the Free State, immediately jumped to the conclusion that Leigh was the man for whom the police were looking. The atmosphere of doubt and tension in the compartment can therefore be imagined.

In a clumsy attempt to divert suspicion from himself to Gustav Herman, Leigh now tried a piece of bluff, which completely misfired. Taking out a sheet of paper he hastily wrote on it, "I'm a police sergeant, No. 8 District, Kimberley, and I'm on the same track as you are."

He passed the note to Lorrimer, and while he was doing this glanced significantly at the unfortunate Gustav.

By this time the highway robbers were beginning to show signs of strain. At the very first opportunity Herman surreptitiously concealed his packets of diamonds in the bundle of rugs. His example was followed by Leigh, who waited until Lorrimer was looking out of the window and then quickly stuck his own parcel into the same bundle.

An uneasy calm now settled on the compartment. At each stopping place Lorrimer, whose suspicions were thoroughly aroused, would leave the train for a few minutes, but he first took the precaution of locking the compartment door behind him. The railway detective was unarmed and it seems incredible that the three desperate men did not overpower him and escape. They made no attempt, however, to do this.

At last they got to Tweeddale Siding and then about five miles further on they stopped at a platelayer's cottage. Here Herman asked Lorrimer to let him out so that he could have a drink of water. He went round to the back of the cottage and took so long that the detective also climbed out to see what had happened to him. He found him just finishing his drink. At this moment the train began moving and they had to run for it. Herman jumped through the window of his compartment and Lorrimer sprang into the van.

The train had already gathered speed when the guard said to Lorrimer, "You know, someone threw a bundle of rugs out of the window just now." This remark determined the detective to return to the compartment as quickly as possible to see what had been taking place in his absence. He therefore made his way precariously along the outside of the swaying coaches, unlocked the door and climbed in. He noticed at once that the rugs were missing, but none of the occupants apparently knew anything about them.

Nothing further occurred until they reached the important railway junction of Naauwpoort. Here events moved swiftly. As a result of Captain Albrecht's investigations into the assault on Kemp, suspicion had definitely been directed towards the three conspirators, and when it had been ascertained that they were making for Port Elizabeth a detective named Saunders had been sent to Naauwpoort to watch the incoming trains from the Free State.

Herman had now had enough of the affair. As soon as they pulled into Naauwpoort he jumped on to the platform and made off, as fast as he could, across the veld. Saunders, however, had seen him and gave chase. Before the fugitive had got very far he was overhauled and brought back to the station under arrest.

In the meantime Scotty and Leigh had gone into the waiting room, where the former offered Lorrimer a drink, but the detective refused. He eventually, however, agreed to have a ginger ale, while his two companions ordered beers. Over their drinks Scotty asked Lorrimer to procure a

railway trolley so that they could go back to look for the missing bundle. At this stage the detective decided that there had been enough beating about the bush. He therefore put his cards on the table.

"Are there diamonds in the bundle?" he asked.

"Of course," Scotty answered. "Otherwise we wouldn't be bothering about it. Will you help us to recover them?"

"If you make it worth my while," the detective said cautiously.

Leigh now chipped in. "I'll give you £200 if you can get me and the bundle safely to Cradock," he whispered. But Lorrimer was an honest man and he had no intention of helping the thieves. He was merely playing for time and so he replied, "I'm afraid it's too late for that. There's another detective here now."

"Can't you square him?" Leigh persisted.

"I'll try," Lorrimer promised. He did nothing of the kind however. Instead he tried to borrow a

revolver, first from Saunders and then from the stationmaster. In both cases he was unsuccessful. He then told the latter about the diamonds, but apparently failed to convince him of his bona fides.

Lorrimer's quest for a trolley proved equally futile and so he decided to walk. Accompanied by Scotty and Leigh he set out along the railway line. But the trio had only gone about fifty yards when they heard footsteps behind them. They stopped and Saunders came up. He put his hand on Scotty's arm and producing a warrant announced, "I'm arresting you."

"What for?" Scotty asked.

"I've received the report of a double murder in the Free State, and I've had instructions to hold you on suspicion of being involved."

To me the strangest part of this highway robbery and its aftermath is Scotty Smith's inexplicable behaviour. Throughout the whole affair he displayed none of the bold, resolute conduct which he exhibited on so many other

occasions. Here he had been arrested on a completely false charge and yet he made no attempt to escape. Instead he meekly allowed himself to be taken back to the station and locked up in the empty compartment of a train which was on the point of leaving for Colesberg.

After Scotty's apprehension, Leigh and Lorrimer continued walking along the railway track towards the plate-layer's cottage. Before long there was another interruption. They heard the sound of hoofs, and a man on horse-back came dashing past. They took no notice of the incident at the time. As they subsequently discovered, however, this man had been sent by the stationmaster to guard the diamonds and to prevent them from falling into their hands.

When they reached the platelayer's house Lorrimer and Leigh saw to their relief that the bundle was there, but they were not so pleased to see that the rider who had passed them on the road had taken possession of it. They tried to persuade him to hand the rugs over but all their attempts were in vain. Just then the platelayer,

who had been out, returned. Leigh now attempted to bluff him that he was a detective and, when this ruse failed, he at last decided to make an effort to escape, although it was a very feeble one. Jumping through the door he ran a short distance across the veld and then, for some reason, stopped. Possibly he still had hopes of acquiring the diamonds and was reluctant to abandon them altogether.

"Shall I send my boys to round him up?" the platelayer asked Lorrimer.

"Don't worry," the latter replied. "Let me first see what I can do."

He walked towards Leigh and without much difficulty induced him to surrender. He then brought him back to the cottage and searched him. In spite of the sergeant's protests he confiscated his revolver and three packets of small diamonds which he found on him. After this he escorted him back to Naauwpoort, and from there to Colesberg, where a forced and not particularly happy reunion took place. The three

partners in crime found themselves together again in a cell in the local prison.

And now there was an extraordinary and highly irregular development in the case. Sam Weil, who had lost his £1,100 packet of diamonds in the robbery, was bent on revenge. At his instigation one of his relatives, Ben Weil, arrived unexpectedly in Colesberg, paid a courtesy call on the magistrate, and managed to bluff that official that he was a justice of the peace in the Free State. As a result he was given an order admitting him to the jail. He there-upon interviewed the prisoners and gave them the assurance that if they admitted their guilt they would not be convicted but would be set free. In view of this promise they all agreed to make voluntary statements before the local magistrate. These confessions were afterwards to play an important part in the subsequent proceedings against them.

In due course a sheriff arrived from the Free State to escort the prisoners to Boshof, where they were lodged in jail to await trial at the next

session of the circuit court. Meanwhile Thomas Welford, the prime originator and organiser of the robbery, was making frantic efforts to keep out of the clutches of the law. His chief fear was that his fellow conspirators might give him away. It was impossible, of course, for him to make a direct approach to them. He therefore tried to induce a young man named Jack Foy to get into the jail, to interview the prisoners, and to induce them to remain silent about his part in the plot.

In his desperation Welford even suggested to Foy that, if all other means failed, he should create a scene outside the prison by knocking someone down so that he would be arrested and incarcerated. Jack Foy, however, refused to have anything to do with this scheme. In any case Welford's fate was sealed. His junior partner, Max Herman, had known all about the conspiracy to rob Sam Kemp, but had taken no part in the actual plot or its execution. This did not, however, save him from being arrested on a charge of complicity. But at the preliminary

examination he was promised indemnity if he turned State evidence. This he promptly did and gave the whole show away.

In addition, the Kimberley police under Captain Albrecht had found a good deal of evidence which incriminated Welford as well as the other accused. Acting on Albrecht's instructions, Detective J.W. Collins had searched Welford's house in the Malay Camp and had found a blanket, a rug strap, a pair of boots and some socks. These had been identified by Sam Kemp as being part of his property which had been in the cart at the time of the robbery. As a result of these developments Welford was also placed under arrest. At this stage an even more damning discovery was made.

About a week after the assault, the two young sons of Mr H.C. Geyer, on whose farm the crime had taken place, were wandering alone in the veld. They had crossed on to a property of their uncle, Mr Antonie Geyer, when they noticed an antbear hole which had been disturbed. They investigated and found a bundle of clothing.

Inside it were a shirt, a pair of trousers, two hats, a revolver case, a gold stud and a couple of crepe veils. The boys immediately reported their find to their uncle. He handed these articles to the authorities, who used them as material evidence against the accused.

Eventually the police completed their investigations and the trial opened at Boshof on 19 March 1885. Mr F.W. Reitz, afterwards the President of the Orange Free State, presided in person, Mr Advocate Kraus prosecuted, and the accused were represented by the best legal talent available.

The case had naturally aroused tremendous public interest. All the accused were well-known characters on the diamond fields, while the brutality of the assault and the fact that I.D.B. was involved stirred up a great deal of feeling. As a result, when the proceedings began there was some difficulty in enrolling an impartial jury. Counsel for the Defence, in fact, challenged so many of its members that the sheriff had at

last to call on one of the spectators to make up the required number.

After this little contretemps had been successfully overcome, the four accused, Scotty Smith alias George Smith alias George Lennox, Thomas Hutchinson Welford, Arthur Gerald Leigh, and Gustav Herman alias Rubenstein, were formally charged, "with robbery, in that they did unlawfully, and on the public road leading from Oliphantsfontein in the district of Boshof, to Zoutpansdrift on the Orange River, being armed with loaded revolvers and a knobkerrie, violently assault Samuel Kemp of Oliphantsfontein and robbed him of two packets of diamonds, etc., etc.

In spite of their confessions all four accused pleaded not guilty. But the evidence of the prosecution was so overwhelming that they had little chance of rebutting the charges against them. One of the strongest points in their favour, however, was the fact that the chief witness for the prosecution put up such a poor performance in the witness box. Samuel Kemp, who had made

so valiant a defence of his life and property during the assault, appeared in quite a different light when called upon to give evidence. His true character was now revealed and he was shown up as a dishonest, shifty character whom the Chief justice had no hesitation in stigmatising as a most unreliable and untrustworthy person.

"I think," he bluntly warned the jury, "that it is probable that Kemp is speaking the truth as regards the robbery, but when it touches any question about the illicit diamond trade no doubt he lies."

During the course of the trial two very interesting legal points were raised by Counsel for the Defence. Advocate Steyn, who appeared on behalf of Scotty Smith, argued the question of lawful possession. He contended that the charge of robbery against the accused could not be sustained as the diamonds were known to be stolen and so were not in the rightful possession of Samuel Kemp. He also argued that the voluntary confessions were inadmissible and should be disregarded as evidence because a substantial

inducement had been offered to the accused to make them.

In his very impartial summing up, the Chief Justice, however, rejected counsel's argument on both these legal points and directed the jury to decide the issue purely on the basis of the factual evidence presented.

So strong was this evidence that the jury had hardly left the room when it was back again and the foreman formally announced that it had found all four accused guilty of the charges preferred against them.

Before pronouncing sentence, the Chief Justice asked the accused whether they had anything to say, and their reaction to this query throws an interesting light on their different characters. Scotty had decided to take his medicine and had the grace to remain silent. Thomas Welford admitted that he had received a fair trial. "I have nothing to say," he stated. "I must be satisfied. Instead of being a robber, I am the robbed. I lost £1,100."

Gustav Herman simply threw himself on the mercy of the court.

The only man who queried the justice of his trial and tried to put the blame on others was the police sergeant, Arthur Leigh. "It is a conspiracy," he exclaimed. "Men who have come against us have been doing such things themselves. I mean the Weils. I was influenced by Weil and Scotty Smith...."

The Chief Justice then proceeded to sentence the accused and in doing so did not hesitate to tell them what he thought of their conduct.

"You are a sergeant in the police," he told Leigh. "You are a protector of the public, and you come into another land to commit robbery. You come with a dished-up story, I regret such an absurd story; better you had not told such an absurd thing. You, a sergeant in the police, using a knobkerrie and revolver. You might, in the strict letter of the law, be hanged, but nowadays a more lenient view is taken. You were stopped

by an accident from being hauled up for murder."

His opinion of Herman was if anything even more unfavourable. "You are a mean little scoundrel," he addressed him, "acting in that way whilst a fellow co-religionist was being robbed, and perhaps all but murdered, such a little fellow you are. You get used for paltry mean things, and here you assist in a mean way in a serious crime."

As for Welford, the judge pointed out, "The evidence against you, I think, is conclusive, although you have a right to say there is a conspiracy against you; those can believe you who like. I believe you are the man who started the whole thing. I would not wonder if you first originated the matter.... "

Finally he turned to Scotty and took no pains to hide the disgust which he felt that a man of his breeding should have played such a tawdry role in the affair.

"It is a pity that a man of your appearance," he remarked sternly, "should deal in stolen property. There is no excuse for you; it is a gross crime. The boundary line is getting dangerous for our people. It is quite an accident that Kemp was not killed. I took you for a man who knew better. I will punish you severely."

He then committed all four accused to jail for four years and in addition ordered Scotty and Leigh to receive twenty-five lashes each. The proceedings of the court were, however, under the existing Free State law automatically reserved for review. As a result the lashes were postponed and were in fact never actually administered.

One other matter remained to be resolved. Of the parcel of 1,377 carats of diamonds, which had been hidden in the bundle of rugs, 1,188 carats had been recovered - a very fair proportion of the total when it is realised to what rough handling they had been subjected. Samuel Kemp did his best to save something from the wreck. He claimed repossession of the precious stones

which had been taken from him. But the court ruled that as they were stolen property, and had obviously been removed from the Kimberley diggings, they should be restored to the custody of the Griqualand West Government for safe keeping. Of the parcel of 697 carats belonging to Sam Weil nothing further was heard. There can be little doubt, however, that after the robbery Gustav Herman had hidden these in a secure place. It is extremely doubtful whether Scotty and Leigh ever saw them again. Probably, when all the fuss had died down and they had been released, Herman and Welford quietly shared these diamonds between themselves, without their fellow conspirators being any the wiser.

As it happened Scotty did not remain in prison for very long. After being confined for a year his sentence was remitted and he was set free. In jail he proved to be a model prisoner. He gave no trouble and, incredible as it may seem, did not once attempt to escape. Perhaps this was because his confinement was not very strenuous.

By exerting his well-known charm he had soon become very popular with his jailers, and on giving his word of honour not to escape he was granted permission to visit the town at any time that he liked during the day. In this way Scotty served much of his sentence in the bar of the local hotel !

CHAPTER ELEVEN

KING OF THE KALAHARI

Scotty's sentence, imprisonment, and the severe castigation administered to him by the Chief Justice appear to have had a somewhat sobering effect on him. And, even if his reformation did not last long, for a time at any rate he seems to have led a fairly respectable life.

Contemporary newspaper accounts of Scotty and his activities are extremely rare. But here is one which appeared within a year or two of his release from jail. It is taken from *The Standard and Transvaal Mining Chronicle* of 24 March 1888, and appears under the heading of "Scotty Smith " in the " Local and General " column.

"This well-known character," the columnist wrote, "has for some time past been pursuing the respectable profession of prospector. After a somewhat eventful career, such a one as perhaps never before fell to the lot of any man, he has evidently at last come to the conclusion that a rolling stone gathers no moss, and resolved henceforth to settle down and use his talents in the honourable and peaceful occupation he is now employed in. For some few years now, he has been at times an interesting topic of conversation throughout South-Africa, owing principally to his erratic character, and the strange predicaments it has at intervals placed him in. We never knew him noted for being possessed of a superfluous quantity of 'gold' (no matter what may have been the impression of sundry people at certain times) and as a laudable ambition, which would be excusable in any man, to obtain a little in an honourable way, coupled with a natural liking to a rambling life, probably influenced him in undertaking a lengthy prospecting tour in Bechuanaland and the protectorate, on behalf of a syndicate, in which Loo Abrams

of Taungs holds the chief interest. He is said to have been very successful in his searches and is credited with having discovered rich reefs showing good prospects at the Molopo River, Rooi Grond and other places. According to the Vryburg paper, the gentleman we are speaking of passed through that town during the early portion of the present month. Now he has rather an unfortunate characteristic of falling into trouble and getting within the meshes of the law whenever he happens to land himself in the midst of a civilised community, and at Vryburg he managed to again get himself into a little scrape, out of which he extricated himself ultimately by the payment of a small fine. According to his own story, told before the magistrate, he had had no liquor since before Christmas till he came to Vryburg. He started drinking Scotch whisky in the morning - and whether he was actuated by a desire to make up for lost time we cannot say, but he expressed his own conviction that he thought he 'had more drink that day than ever in his life before.' Our readers may after this form their own opinion of the state in which he was

likely to be after the sun had set for a couple of hours, when Lieut Bruse, B.B.P., arrested him for loitering about his (the Lieut's) premises. 'Scotty's' story was that he lost his way and rapped at the window of the Lieutenant, to request him to show him to the place where he had outspanned his cart. The Lieutenant replied 'come along' and took 'Scotty's' arm. But instead of leading him to his cart he took him to the lock-up. Unfortunately for 'Scotty,' the magistrate was of opinion that a person who wished to enquire his way would knock at the door and not at the window; but taking a lenient view of the case he sentenced him to a fine of £1, or fourteen days' hard labour in default. 'Scotty' did not become a defaulter. The local paper says he is greatly struck by the changed appearance of the spot where Vryburg now stands since the old days when he, amongst others, lived the bold and rough life of Mankaroane's volunteers. He thinks the residents of the country are acting in a short-sighted manner in spending money so meanly for prospecting purposes. Were half the energy shown by them as has been shown by the people

here, the result would, he is confident, exceed those realised in the country. So strongly does 'Scotty' express himself. We hope he will be able to infuse a little spirit into some of his admirers in those parts. It might be well for himself if he did so, as his own business would then probably keep him away and out of the places where he fares so badly. Town life does not suit him; we prescribe the country."

Unfortunately this well-meant advice fell on deaf ears, and Scotty was soon up to his old tricks again. For a time he made Wolmaransstad his headquarters, and he used this as a base for running arms and ammunition to the Hottentots and half-breeds who were in rebellion against the Germans in South West Africa. Leaving the town his wagons would skirt Vryburg and then strike across British Bechuanaland and the Kalahari Desert until they reached German territory.

From Wolmaransstad, Scotty and his gang also operated against the Gibson and Zeederburg stage coaches and in 1889 he was reliably

reported to be particularly active, waylaying and robbing travellers in the Christiana and Bloemhof districts.

For some years, apparently, he managed to keep out of jail and then he was caught red-handed stealing cattle. He was brought before the Kimberley court on a charge of stock theft, was found guilty, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. This time, however, he did not remain in custody for very long. In fact he made a bold, dramatic escape which added considerably to his reputation as South-Africa's most daring jail-breaker.

One day he was detailed with some other prisoners to work at the governor's residence. After a while an official rode up to consult the governor about some matter. He dismounted and the warder, who should have known better, ordered Scotty to hold his horse while he was inside. This was a gift from heaven for the outlaw. As soon as the warder's back was turned Scotty leapt into the saddle and rode for his life.

That was the last that those particular prison authorities saw of the famous cattle lifter.

It was after this that Scotty decided that the area round Kimberley was getting too hot to hold him. It was time to transfer his activities elsewhere. In the early 'nineties he moved a few hundred miles westwards and established himself deep in the Kalahari on a farm which he made his headquarters. This was at Leitland's Pan³ on the Molopo River. Here, at Scotty's Fort in the same area, and at King's Rest about twenty miles east of Leitland's Pan, Scotty farmed for many years, without possessing any legal right to the ground on which he was living. In fact it was not until nearly four decades later when the country was marked out for the first time by a Government surveyor, named Jackson, that proper titles were issued.

³ Also called Luitenant's Pan by Scotty after one of his favourite horses "Luitenant", and now better known as Lentlandspan. Another Kalahari farm, which was never occupied by him, but was subsequently named in his honour, was Scottismith in the Kuruman district.

Scotty was now supposed to have turned over a new leaf, and to have settled down to a quieter and more respectable life. But this was far from the truth, and while he almost certainly gave up highway robbery he continued to indulge in horse and cattle-lifting, gun-running and various other illegal activities.

In 1891 Groot Gert Coetzee, who was in the police force at the time, had been assigned the job of patrolling a long stretch of the Orange River. A great deal of liquor was being smuggled over the border from Bechuanaland into the Cape Colony, and it was his duty to examine any vehicle which wanted to cross the frontier. One day he came to the farm Rooilyf, which was situated about seventy miles east of Upington on the north bank of the river. There he found Scotty Smith. He searched his wagon and discovered three kegs of brandy, each containing about eight gallons of liquor. He reported the matter to his superior officer and Scotty was detained for three weeks. But the old rogue, with a bland look of innocence on his face, pleaded so

eloquently that he was unaware that it was illegal to take brandy across the frontier that he actually got off.

While living in the Kalahari, Scotty continued his habit of suddenly vanishing and then turning up in the most unexpected places. And, as was his custom, he rarely spoke about these trips. No one knows, for example, what he was doing in Durban in 1891, and it is only by accident that his presence there has been recorded.

During the early 'nineties of last century the whole of South-Africa was thrilled by the railway race between the Cape, Natal, and Lourenço Marques, the prize being the harvest of trade with the newly opened Witwatersrand gold fields. In 1892 the Cape, backed by Rhodes, won the race, but there was tremendous excitement when, in the previous year, the line from Lourenço Marques (the project which President Kruger was backing) crossed the Komati River and entered the Transvaal at Komatipoort. Big celebrations were held in Lourenço Marques and

it is possible that Scotty had been there to join in them.

At any rate a steward on the Union Line coaster African has left this record of a scene on the ship, in which Scotty played a prominent part. In its issue of 12th January 1941, the *Sunday Times* published a letter from "Rand Pioneer", who wrote:

"We have come back from the opening of the Delagoa Komatipoort railway. We were just leaving Durban for the Cape with a good many passengers and were only a few miles out when there was a sudden commotion. Everybody seemed to be chasing someone else. Eventually we discovered that Scotty Smith was chasing one King, who was the hangman at that time at Cape Town.

"It appeared that they had been bitter enemies for some time. Captain Smyth threatened to put them both in irons if they did not behave themselves. When we got to East London, where

Smith intended landing, the morning paper came out and on the front page in big type was:

BEWARE OF SCOTTY SMITH WHO IS A PASSENGER ON THE AFRICAN

"Smith did not land, but went on to Mossel Bay.... I once saw him stripped, and he was all scars from head to foot. I have in my possession a silver cuff link which he gave me as keepsake."

It would be intriguing to know what Scotty's connection with the Cape Town hangman was and why they had quarrelled, but unfortunately there is no key to this mystery. The statement that Scotty's body was badly scarred is also interesting. It seems to imply that at some time in his career he had been flogged, but had this really taken place it would surely have been mentioned by some of the other people who knew him. At any rate the incident, which took place when Scotty was about forty-five, shows that he had lost none of his fiery spirit and aggressiveness.

In 1892, at the age of forty-six, Scotty married for the first time. His bride was an Afrikaner girl, nineteen year old Sarah van Niekerk, who, in spite of her youth, had also done a good deal of travelling in South-Africa. Her father was a well-sinker by profession and as she grew up she accompanied him on many of his trips.

Scotty once told a friend how he had come to propose to Sarah. "I'd been seriously ill," he remarked, "and she had looked after me very well and had taken good care of me. When I was getting better I said to her '*Sarah, ek wil met jou trou,*' and she replied, '*Ek gee nie om nie*'."

He and Sarah were happily married for about twenty-seven years, until his death in 1919. During this time they brought up a family of seven children; two boys and five girls. Mrs Gordon Lennox must have had a good deal to put up with from her unpredictable husband. Occasionally she would accompany him on trips to Upington, Kuruman and other neighbouring towns. But, as was his custom, he would some-

times disappear for weeks, or even months at a time. His wife never knew when to expect him back and he seldom told her much about these excursions. She was always aware, however, if he had been on a trip to the Kalahari, because then he would off-load a fine collection of desert trophies - Bushman skeletons, jackal skins, rodent skulls, spiders, scorpions and other specimens of scientific interest.

At his farm at Leitland's Pan, Scotty had soon gathered together a small force of men, which he employed on his horse-lifting and cattle-raiding excursions. This gang consisted of a couple of white lieutenants, a number of Hottentots and Basters and two or three Bushmen.

Besides the members of his gang Scotty had from time to time other European associates with whom he went into partnership in his stock-raiding and other illegal transactions. There were, for example, Duncan and Wheeler, who had a farm in South West Africa which they used as an assembly station for the horses and cattle they stole from the Germans. From there the

animals would be driven across the frontier to Leitland's Pan and Scotty would then take them through the Kalahari and dispose of them on the Vryburg stock market.

Other well-known characters, who linked up with Scotty from time to time, were Sancho Smythe, the famous guide, scout and despatch rider, and a particularly disreputable fellow named Stumke. Stumke and Scotty went into partnership in a small trading station which they set up at Leitland's Pan, with gun running and other less legitimate pursuits as profitable sidelines. The trading venture did fairly well at first, but before long Scotty and Stumke began to quarrel violently. On one occasion, at least, this led to an open fight, which Scotty abruptly ended by cracking his opponent over the head with a yoke key. Eventually their relations deteriorated to such an extent that the partnership was dissolved. That would not have mattered but a lawsuit followed, in which Scotty is believed to have lost a great deal of money.

Scotty had a number of Bushmen living on his farm at Leitland's Pan. He made frequent use of them as trackers, an art in which they were among the finest exponents in the world. But they were also invaluable to him in another way. They acted as his watchdogs and kept him informed of any approaching danger so that he had plenty of time to take the necessary preventive steps.

Apparently, however, even they sometimes slipped up. Scotty had a great friend at Upington, a Roman Catholic priest of whom I shall have more to relate. One day they were discussing the hard times which some people have to endure, when Scotty fell into a reminiscent mood.

"You know, Father," he remarked, "my Bushmen friends saved me from arrest more than once. I remember a time when things were very bitter in the desert. We hadn't had rain for years and the people were slowly dying of starvation. I had to do something to feed my followers and so I took an ox here, and a cow or a sheep there, from the farmers.

"Of course it was not long before this was reported and the police got on my track. One day they decided to send a posse to visit my place at Leitland's Pan. For once my little yellow people failed to warn me of the approaching raid, but fortunately I saw the camel patrol when it was still a long way off. I was, however, in a bit of a quandary, because there was a wagon at the back of my house that didn't really belong to me, and it was loaded with skins and hides, which I wasn't particularly anxious to have investigated. So I hastily summoned my Bushmen and told them to take the wagon to pieces and hide the parts, as well as the skins, while I intercepted the police and delayed them with talking.

"The sergeant must have had a good tip-off, because when his men arrived they seemed confident they would find something. But although they searched the place thoroughly there was nothing. My people had done their work well.

"To tell the truth, Father," Scotty concluded with a sly chuckle, "I bore the police no malice.

They were only doing their duty. And before they left I gave them a big dinner. Afterwards they told me how much they had enjoyed it, but they never knew where the meat came from!"

On another occasion Scotty, with the aid of his Bushmen retainers, led the police a merry dance. At the time there was a reward out for his capture, and as a precautionary measure he had retreated deep into the Kalahari. Then one day he received a message that a particularly zealous sergeant, accompanied by a small posse, had set out on his trail and had sworn that he would not return without him.

Scotty immediately decided to teach the sergeant a lesson. He therefore selected a few of his best men and issued strict instructions that they were to keep just out of reach of the patrol. Every now and again, however, they were to show themselves and pretend to be at the end of their tether. In this way they were to give the sergeant the impression that he was on the point of catching up with them. They were to lead him

on and on in a wild goose chase, further and further into the Kalahari.

The Bushmen carried out their master's orders faithfully. In fact they played this new and exciting game so successfully that the policemen were enticed ever deeper and deeper into the desert. At last when their water supplies were nearly exhausted they remonstrated with their officer, and urged him to turn back before it was too late. But he obstinately refused. Gradually one by one his men gave up and dropped out. He, however, pushed doggedly on until, alone and deserted, he finally collapsed. His water was finished and he would have died had not one of the Bushmen, who had remained close to him all the time, suddenly appeared and by signs indicated that he should follow him. Summoning his last reserves of strength, and leading his equally exhausted horse, the sergeant limped after his guide, and at last staggered into Scotty's camp.

"I took away his weapons," Scotty remarked to the friend who told me this story, "provided

him with food and water and allowed him to recuperate. When he had recovered I said to him, 'I believe, sergeant, you swore to take me. Now, have a good look at me and then you can at least tell your people that you saw Scotty Smith. Let this be a lesson to you not to brag about your intentions until you are quite sure you can do what you say.

"I then gave him sufficient food and water to get him to Upington," Scotty concluded, "and I also provided him with one of my tame Bushmen as a guide until he could find his way safely back to his own headquarters."

Living for years in close proximity to the primitive little yellow men of the desert, Scotty got to know them very well. In fact it was this association which earned for him the title, "King of the Bushmen", by which he was generally known among his white neighbours. In course of time he became acquainted with many of the Bushmen's most carefully guarded secrets, secrets which more than once saved his life in the relentless struggle for existence, which the

desert exacted from those who pitted their wits against it.

So bitter was this struggle that on one occasion Scotty is reputed to have taken another man's life in order to survive. According to this story he had lost his way among the sand dunes, his water bottle was empty, and his position was becoming desperate.

Suddenly, to his great relief, he saw a Hottentot in the distance. When he got closer he noticed that the man was carrying an ostrich egg shell, which he knew must contain his water supply. Scotty went up to him and offered him a good price for a share of the precious liquid. But there are times in the Kalahari when money is as valueless as the sands which compose it. And this was one of them. In spite of all Scotty's pleadings, the Hottentot flatly refused to part with a single drop of the life-saving fluid. Scotty there-upon drew his revolver and shot him dead.

When he used to tell this story in later years, and people raised their eyebrows, Scotty would

shrug his shoulders and remark, "Well, it was a question of his life or mine, and I considered mine was of more value than his."

This incident raises an interesting question about which there has been a great deal of controversy. Did Scotty Smith ever kill anyone in cold blood? Many of his friends have assured me that this was impossible, and that whatever other sins he may have committed he only shot his opponents in the heat of battle, or when he was being hunted down and attacked.

Mr G. Bergh, for example, wrote to me: "According to my father, who knew Scotty intimately, he was never known to have robbed anyone in poor circumstances, nor to have killed anyone, and the revolver he carried on rare occasions was a rusty one with a bullet jammed in the barrel. When he held up drivers of coaches or owners of horses he did so with this same unserviceable weapon."

Many of Scotty's friends have given similar testimony. On the other hand it must be admitted

that when he waylaid Samuel Kemp he not only had a loaded revolver with him, but certainly used it and, as the Chief justice remarked, it was largely a matter of luck that a murder was not committed.

At the time when Scotty was supplying Bushmen skeletons to various museums there were widespread rumours that the facility with which he acquired these skeletons would not bear a close investigation. One writer has even alleged that they had been preserved in chalk and were comparatively fresh. In my opinion, however, Scotty knew where the corpses were buried and he had a retentive memory, so that these insinuations are probably baseless. But there are other episodes in his career of which it is not so easy to dispose.

There is, for example, the rather sinister incident which Mr Fred Inggs of Douglas told me about. Mr Inggs, one of the North-west Cape's best-known citizens, first met Scotty in 1905 at Draghoender, which in those days consisted solely of a wayside store, an hotel, a

post office and a small school, "stuck on miles and miles of bare veld".

Scotty was on his way to Cape Town in connection with litigation about some land which he owned. At the time the railway line was being constructed from De Aar to Prieska, and he was travelling by horse and cart to the railhead between these two places.

He spent the day resting at the Draghoender Hotel and Mr Inggs describes him as "a typical Scot. He had bright blue eyes, a clear complexion and a short beard. He spoke softly, and with a strong Scotch accent."

They got on very well together and that evening Scotty was telling Mr Inggs something about his various escapades and adventures when a man named Classens, whom Scotty recognised as an old prospector friend from the pioneer diamond diggings days at Klipdrift, came in. He joined them and as it grew later and later and the rounds of beer circulated more and more freely,

the reminiscences flowed on and on. All of a sudden Classens lowered his voice.

"And do you remember, Scotty, the day we were playing cards on the diggings, and you had a dispute with that chap at our table and you shot and killed him, and how we got rid of the body?"

Scotty hurriedly raised his finger to his lips and glanced significantly at his friend. He changed the subject and nothing more was said about the matter, but Mr Inggs added a note to the story, which may or may not have a certain significance.

"I know," he told me, "that after Scotty returned to Upington from his trip to the Cape he sent Classens £25." Then there is this story, told to me by Mr J. Preller of Leadmine in the Transvaal, and which was often related to him by his father, Mr A.O. Preller, a well known prospector in the Eastern Transvaal in the early days. Scotty once took possession of a large piece of land on the Lowveld to the west of Barberton and not very far from the Swaziland border. He

put up a crude house on his property and erected beacons. He then informed the Africans living there that in future they would have to pay him a tax if they wished to remain in possession of their lands.

They were naturally furious at this treatment, and their attitude became so threatening that, in order to frighten them off, Scotty drove a number of stakes into the ground surrounding his residence and on these he placed some human skulls which he had found in a neighbouring cave. This prevented the superstitious tribesmen from attacking his property. Instead they complained to their headman, who decided to send five of his men to Pilgrim's Rest to seek redress from the landdrost there.

Scotty, hearing of their intentions, decided to stop them at all costs. At a suitable place in the foothills of the Drakensberg he lay in wait and when they appeared he shot the lot. He then went to the headman's kraal and told him that he must enforce the new tax which he had imposed. A heated argument ensued and at last Scotty lost

his temper. Jumping up he drew his large sheath knife and drove it violently into the ground.

"If you don't do what I say," he shouted, "I'll stick this knife into you, O Chief, just as I've now plunged it into the earth."

This threat failed to upset the chief but the indunas sprang angrily to their feet and raised their assegais in order to avenge the insult to their overlord. Scotty's life was in imminent danger but with an imperious wave of his hand their leader quietened his excited men.

"Dogs," he bellowed. "If this white man wants to kill me, how can you stop him? Go, fetch meat and beer that this matter may be discussed as befits men."

And so the affair ended peacefully and Scotty got what he wanted.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONFIDENCE TRICKSTER

Apart from the various acts of highway robbery, brigandage and filibustering which have

become associated with Scotty Smith's name, there is no doubt that he often lived on his wits and that on more than one occasion he pulled off business deals of an extremely dubious nature.

Soon after his arrival at Leitland's Pan, for example, he is reputed to have carried out a piece, of sharp practice at the expense of an unsuspecting property owner who wished to sell some of his land. Scotty was prepared to buy it, but in order to save the lawyer's fees he suggested that he should draw up the sales contract. The seller was agreeable and Scotty duly presented him with the deed of sale, containing the purchase price and other details.

After the man had read the deed, but before he had signed it, Scotty slipped in a clean sheet of paper, which projected for a couple of inches under the original contract. The seller thought that he was signing at the foot of this. Actually however, he was putting his signature to a blank page, which Scotty subsequently filled in to suit himself. As the deed was properly signed, it was

legally fool-proof, and by this means he acquired the land without paying a cent for it.

But perhaps the most ingenious story of Scotty's attempts at confidence trickery are told in *Trader on the Veld* by Albert Jackson. Mr Jackson, until his death in 1959 in his eighty-seventh year, was a prominent Port Elizabeth merchant, educationist and public figure. As a young man he ran a trading store for many years at Rietfontein in the Kalahari not far from Scotty's headquarters at Leitland's Pan, and he proved more than a match for the wily outlaw.

"Scotty often came to my farm," he relates, "but I was always wary of him. At our first encounter he brought me a cow for barter. This I purchased for £3 and put into a kraal. Next day my servant told me the cow had run away to its calf at home. Three or four weeks later my boy came in to say that Scotty had once again turned up with a cow for sale.

"'It's the same cow, Baas,' he said.

"Calling for my gun, I shot the cow dead there and then, saying to Scotty, 'This is the last time you will sell me that cow of yours'."

This anecdote provides, I think, a good insight into Scotty's peculiar mentality. He was not in the least upset at his duplicity being exposed or, as Mr Jackson puts it, "Far from being abashed he merely laughed it off."

It is also a good example of his colossal self-confidence because, in spite of this abortive attempt at cheating Mr Albert Jackson, he actually had the nerve to borrow £50 from him when he met him at Draghoender some time later. Mr Jackson made the time-honoured excuse that he was temporarily short of ready money. But Scotty blandly informed him that an attorney, Mr Tilney, had just collected £50 from a Rietfontein man on his account. So impressed was Mr Jackson with Scotty's knowledge of his business affairs that he lent him the money on the spot. Afterwards he wrote it off as a bad debt.

The story has a strange sequel. Although the trader had been kind enough to assist him, his action did not deter Scotty from subsequently trying to pull off a barefaced swindle at his expense. This was rather an involved business which concerned the Philander Bastards, a mixed tribe which had come originally from Schietfontein (now Carnarvon) in the Cape Colony. They were great hunters and under their leader, Captain Dirk Philander, they had settled at Middlepost, about six miles from Rietfontein. They had subsequently claimed a huge piece of territory stretching from the Orange River to the land of the Bondelswarts, west of the 21st degree longitude. Dirk Philander had been succeeded by his son, David, and, when the German authorities had refused to recognise his claim, the new leader had handed over his country to Great Britain, but not before he had ceded all his people's mineral rights to a Port Elizabeth company for a sum of £500 a year.

Mr Jackson, who was running a trading post at Dragoender at the time, acted as this

syndicate's agent in its dealings with the new captain, Dirk Philander, and so got to know him quite well. One day Scotty told him that he had bought Philander's entire rights under the settlement which the Port Elizabeth syndicate had made with him. In proof of this he produced an impressive-looking document, witnessed by the Rhenish Missionary at Rietfontein, the Rev. Heinrich Pabst, and by Sergeant Eaton, the commandant of the police station. Mr Jackson knew their hand writing well, so that the document appeared to be quite genuine. It was moreover properly stamped with the correct British Bechuanaland revenue dues, which had been cancelled with the Uppington magisterial stamp. Scotty now proposed to sell the document, which was worth £500 a year for an indefinite period, to Mr Jackson for £2,000.

This was a very tempting offer, especially as everything seemed to be in order, but knowing Scotty as he did, the trader was dubious. He therefore suggested that he should first get in touch with the Port Elizabeth syndicate. Scotty,

however, would not hear of this, a fact which completely confirmed Mr Jackson's suspicions that there was something fishy about the whole deal. He therefore proposed that as Scotty owed him £50 he would cancel this debt if Scotty gave him a £2,000 option for three months. Seeing that Mr Jackson was adamant, Scotty reluctantly agreed. The former then got the syndicate to make enquiries, as a result of which the document was exposed as a complete forgery. Apparently Scotty had managed to get hold of the official magisterial stamp by a trick. He had waited until the magistrate had left his office for lunch and then borrowed the stamp from the office boy, who had been left in charge.

Mr Jackson thought that this was the end of the matter, but although he never recovered his money, in believing the worst of Scotty he did the outlaw an injustice. It was only some years afterwards that he discovered that Scotty had actually made a genuine effort to repay him. One day, while living in Port Elizabeth, he met a man whom he had known in his Kalahari days.

This man had had something on his conscience for a long time, and he now unburdened himself. He told Mr Jackson that before leaving Upington for Port Elizabeth, Scotty had brought him ten oxen, which were worth about £50, and had asked him to remit this amount to him. Unfortunately he knew Scotty only too well and he had the gravest doubts about how he had acquired the animals. Not wishing to risk a charge of being an accessory after the fact in a theft case, he had refused point blank to accede to his request. The incident does, however, show Scotty's queer sense of morality as there was no longer any real necessity for him to have honoured this particular debt.

The man from the Kalahari was by no means the only person who was suspicious of Scotty and his transactions. Apparently the first question which people who knew him well were inclined to ask, when he attempted to trade or barter with them, was: "Where did you get it from?"

Mr F. Buchheimer, an old gentleman now living in retirement at Sea Point, told me that in 1904 he was working for W. Stern & Co., a firm of merchants and general dealers in Upington. Mr Stern managed his own shop and he had many business transactions with Scotty.

One day Mr Buchheimer was in the store when Scotty walked in, and he heard him say to Mr Stern, "I know you're a lover of animals, and I've got just the right horse for you. He's a fine beast and I'll guarantee he'll carry you anywhere you may want to go in the back country."

Without the slightest hesitation Mr Stern replied, "Look, Scotty, tell me one thing first. Where did you get him from?"

Scotty laughed. "Don't worry," he rejoined. "This is quite genuine. There's no funny business about it. He belongs to me all right."

"Well, what do you want for him?"

"Two cases of whisky," Scotty replied. "And he's worth every drop of that."

They went outside and had a look at the animal. He was a magnificent chestnut gelding with a lovely flowing mane and a tail almost sweeping the ground. The bargain was clinched. Scotty received his whisky and Mr Stern acquired a fine horse which rendered him wonderful service for many years.

The kind of life which Scotty Smith led involved him in numerous scrapes with his unfortunate neighbours. But he had a remarkable facility for slipping out of the tightest of corners. And his ready wit invariably stood him in good stead when things began to look desperate for him.

Soon after he had settled at Leitland's Pan, for example, an angry neighbour rode to Taungs to report to the police that Scotty had not only stolen some of his cattle but was actually sending them to the town to be sold there. A policeman was immediately despatched to arrest Scotty, and it looked as though for once he had been caught red-handed. But he was much too clever for the law. When the mounted constable arrived and

taxed him with the theft, Scotty made no attempt to deny that he had taken the cattle.

"Of course I have them," he pointed out. "They were trespassing on my property, and so I am sending them to the pound."

In spite of his neighbour's furious protests he refused to release the animals and the farmer had to pay the pound dues before he could recover them.

Scotty was certainly up to all the tricks of the trade. On another occasion his gang was carrying out such extensive raids in the Gordonia district that two farmers who had suffered heavy losses decided to take the law into their own hands. Loading their rifles they set out to interview Scotty. When they approached the homestead they, fastened their horses to a tree and went up to the house on foot. Scotty, who had been watching them for some time, went out to meet them. His quick eye immediately noticed that they were armed and in an extremely hostile mood.

"Well, my friends," he greeted them cordially, "what can I do for you?"

For once, however, his charm failed to make any impression.

"It's not what you can do for us," one of the exasperated farmers growled. "It's what we're going to do to you. We've come to shoot you."

"In that case, gentlemen," Scotty rejoined mildly, "you'd better carry on with your intentions. Here I am."

This meek reply was so unexpected that the men were completely nonplussed. They had been fully prepared to deal with truculence and even violence but Scotty's complaisance took the wind completely out of their sails. For a moment they stood stock still and then without a word they turned on their heels and walked rapidly away.

Suddenly they stopped, hardly able to believe their eyes. There in the distance they could see their horses being led over the horizon by some of Scotty's tame Bushmen.

At this second shock all the bluster went out of the two men. They came back to where the smiling Scotty was waiting for them and quite humbly asked him to help them recover their mounts. Scotty agreed to do this and invited them in to have a cup of coffee while they were waiting.

In the meantime he gave certain instructions and after a while the Bushmen were seen returning with the horses. In the end, such was Scotty's personality, the two men forgot their grievances and they parted the best of friends.

It was about this time, too, that Scotty engaged in a series of business duels with a Frenchman named De Jay, duels in which the latter invariably got the worst of matters. His first transaction with the Frenchman was when he bought a wagon, a span of oxen and a load of merchandise from him for £800, the agreement being that this sum was to be paid within a year.

On hearing of this, one of De Jay's friends told him that he could whistle for his money and

expressed surprise that he had been such a fool as to trust the outlaw, instead of demanding cash. The Frenchman's reply was brief and to the point:

"If I hadn't given him credit he'd have taken them anyway, whereas now I have some slight hope that he'll pay me back."

Strangely enough De Jay's optimism was completely justified, because Scotty drew a strict distinction between stealing and borrowing. If he borrowed anything he always tried to repay his debt, whereas theft well, that was quite another matter, and put him under no obligation to recompense his victim.

At the end of the year, punctual almost to the day, Scotty arrived with a bag containing the full amount, £800, in cash. He duly handed it over to De Jay and the latter locked it up in a cupboard. Then they began celebrating, the Frenchman because he had received his money back, and Scotty because any excuse for a carousal was as good as another. Before long they had had far

too much to drink, but whereas De Jay had lapsed into a drunken stupor, Scotty was still almost as fresh as when he had started. He pulled the Frenchman's boots off and put him to bed. After this he picked the lock of the cupboard, removed the money and took his departure.

When De Jay eventually awoke late the following morning his first thought was for his £800. His worst forebodings, proved true. Although he made a search every penny was gone, and there was no doubt who had stolen it. The Frenchman hastily summoned the police and they set out after the robber.

They came up with him, where he had camped for the night about fifteen miles away. When taxed with the theft Scotty hotly denied that he was the culprit, but in spite of his protestations they insisted on searching him. They found no sign of the notes. Then they spread out and examined the surrounding area. Here they came upon their first clue. Some distance away one of them picked up an empty bag. He looked at it in a puzzled kind of way

because its sides had been cut out. He showed it to his companions and they scratched their heads over it, much to Scotty's secret amusement. Had they only known it, the clue of the mutilated bag should have led them straight to the hidden money. Sherlock Holmes would have seen it at once, but they were only country policemen with no training in detection work. And although they returned to the wagon and made a thorough search of it, they missed the obvious conclusion.

It was not until a long time afterwards that Scotty told one of his friends how he had tricked the officers of the law.

"You see," he explained, "I fixed the notes to the underside of the bed of the wagon, and then I tacked the sides of the bag over them. I knew the police would not dream of looking there. They'd only think of examining the inside of the wagon, and I was right."

De Jay, however, had not yet learnt his lesson that it was asking for trouble to have any financial dealings with Scotty. On another

occasion he and Scotty engaged in a mammoth bridge marathon. They played almost continuously for a whole week, and of course the liquor flowed freely. In the end Scotty collected all De Jay's money he had won steadily throughout the session and departed leaving his opponent in a comatose condition.

When the Frenchman recovered he considered that he had been swindled and so he reported the matter to the police. Once more they set off on Scotty's trail and finally arrested him. But there was no sign of the cash and as De Jay had no legal proof that he had been robbed the proceedings were withdrawn. Scotty is then reputed to have claimed and obtained £4,000 for illegal arrest! I can, however, find no account of this case in the Cape's criminal court records.

De Jay must have been a complete fool, because in spite of these shady tricks played on him by his friend he actually agreed to go transport riding with him. This time, however, Scotty let him off very lightly. They were travelling with full loads from Upington to

Nakop and each was responsible for his own wagons. After they had outspanned for the first night the sky began to cloud over and it looked as though it might rain. Now one wagon in each convoy contained perishable goods which needed to be protected from the weather. De Jay had thoughtfully provided a large buck sail for this purpose, but Scotty either did not have one or had forgotten to bring it with him, so he came over to the Frenchman and asked him to lend him his. De Jay naturally refused as he pointed out that he might require it himself. Scotty said no more but turned in. De Jay, knowing Scotty by this time, took the precaution of putting the sail on the ground and sleeping next to it.

About three o'clock the following morning the storm struck and the heavens opened. So violently did the rain come pelting down that the ground was soon converted into a slushy mess. jumping up, the Frenchman stretched out his hand for the sail but it was gone. He knew, of course, that Scotty had taken it to use as a protection for his own goods. But the wagons

were spread out for a considerable distance and they all looked alike in the pitch darkness. After searching for a while De Jay gave up in disgust as he was getting soaking wet.

Just before dawn the rain stopped. As soon as it was light, the Frenchman went to recover his sail and tell Scotty exactly what he thought of him. But as usual the rogue had forestalled him. There was the missing sheet of canvas lying next to the Frenchman. His load was, however, saturated while that of Scotty's was as dry as cork.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE DESERT WAR

It was no mere coincidence that when Scotty Smith took up residence at Leitland's Pan in the Kalahari Desert he should have chosen this particular part of the country, so close to the borders of South West Africa, for his retirement. Ever since the Germans had obtained a toehold in Damaraland, the English authorities had become increasingly nervous about their colonial designs and territorial ambitions in Southern

Africa. It is almost certain therefore that Scotty's successful spying and intelligence work during the Stellaland-Goshen campaigns had been duly noted by the Imperial authorities and that he had been asked to settle near the German frontier for a very definite purpose. There, as a paid agent in the service of British Intelligence, it was his duty to keep a watchful eye on what was happening across the border, a task, incidentally, he faithfully performed for many years. This also probably explains the fact that his somewhat unorthodox career received a degree of indulgence from the police for which it is otherwise difficult to account.

In 1884 the Germans had declared a protectorate over Namaqua-Damaraland, and had immediately subjected the freedom-loving Hereros, Ovambos, Namas and other tribes which inhabited the territory, to a cruel and oppressive tyranny. Gradually, as the tension mounted, the tribes became more and more restive, until in the late 'eighties of last century

the smouldering hostility of the Namas broke into open rebellion.

In the fighting which followed, the rebels were led by Hendrik Witbooi of the Witbooi tribe -a tribe which received its name from the fact that its members wore hats with white bands round them. At first the odds were all against the Germans. Major Kurt von Francois, who was in charge of operations, had only a force of fifty soldiers to defend a vast area. His men were quite inexperienced in this type of warfare, while his opponents knew the desert well. As a result he could at first accomplish very little. In April 1893, however, he managed to take Witbooi's stronghold at Hornkrans by surprise. But it was an empty victory because, although the old men, women and children were captured and marched triumphantly into Windhoek, the chief and his soldiers escaped unhurt.

In spite of this success the war continued intermittently until at last the German authorities took decisive steps to end hostilities. An able officer, Major Leutwein, was put in charge and

was given a few hundred soldiers and some field guns. The Hottentots proved elusive, however, and it was only after a good deal of skirmishing that Leutwein managed to bring them to bay in August 1894, and a decisive battle was fought. Witbooi was badly beaten. He was forced to submit and, to accept terms which were surprisingly lenient -a pension of £100 a year on condition that he retired to Gibeon and kept the peace. But the truce was an uneasy one, and the Germans were in a state of constant suspense that the war might break out again at any moment. Nor were their fears allayed when they discovered that Witbooi was secretly obtaining guns from Scotty Smith, Bob Duncan and other freebooters operating in the area.

During the next decade there was intermittent fighting. In 1902 the Bondelswarts rose, and two years later there was a much more serious insurrection when the great Herero rebellion took place. In January 1904, the Hereros massacred about a thousand German settlers. Showing an unexpected streak of chivalry they confined their

slaughter to the men, and did not molest their womenfolk and children, or interfere with missionaries, Englishmen and Boers.

Even before he settled permanently in the desert, Scotty had a definite grudge against the German authorities. He had acquired a large piece of land in the vicinity of Keetmanshoop. When the occupation took place he put in a formal claim to this property. In spite of his representations, however, it was repudiated by the new owners of the country.

Strangely enough, his next clash with the Germans came over an incident in which the freebooter was for once the innocent victim. In fact he appears to have had a genuine cause for complaint against the arrogant soldiers of the Kaiser for the high-handed way in which they treated him.

He had taken his wagons across the South West frontier on a perfectly genuine transport job and was carrying a variety of goods and provisions to Windhoek. There was nothing

illegal or contraband about his load and yet on some trumped-up pretext the Germans peremptorily confiscated his wagons and refused to grant him any compensation.

Scotty was a good hater and he bided his time. He did not have long to wait, for the disturbed times soon gave him his opportunity. Linking up with Witbooi he became his chief military adviser. And then from his headquarters at Leitland's Pan he set about systematically harrying the Germans with the small freebooter army which he had assembled for this specific purpose. Scotty's private army consisted of three or four white lieutenants, thirty to forty Hottentots and a couple of Bushmen trackers, and he went to a good deal of pains to train and instruct it. As a result he soon had at his command a formidable little force, which he employed for making constant forays across the frontier into South West Africa.

Scotty seems to have had little difficulty in arming and equipping his followers. His main source of supply comprised weapons captured

from the enemy during his raids into their territory. But he had no scruples about obtaining guns by other means as well. On one occasion, for example, he received the tip that a frontier trader had just received a consignment of arms. Late that afternoon Scotty paid him a visit, accompanied by about thirty of his Hottentot soldiers. He told the merchant bluntly that he had come to commandeer his rifles and ammunition and that he had better hand them over immediately or else and he made a significant gesture.

With a sinking heart the shopkeeper realised that resistance was useless. He was, however, a man of spirit and he was determined not to surrender his goods without making some attempt to retain them. He therefore decided to pit his wits against Scotty's. He prided himself on his ability to carry more liquor than most people and so he thought that it would be a good idea to make Scotty drunk. Accordingly he produced a case of whisky and offered him a glass. Nothing loath Scotty opened a bottle and they sat down to a drinking contest. Unfor-

tunately for the trader, however, he had overestimated his staying powers as compared with those of his opponent. When dawn broke he awoke with a splitting headache, crawled painfully out from under the table and made the mortifying discovery that Scotty, his Hottentot soldiers, all the guns and ammunition, the case of whisky, and most of the stores in the shop had vanished.

As the fame of Scotty's exploits spread, large numbers of Hottentots and Griquas from the Molopo River area flocked to join his standard. Before long he had become a real power in the land, the true uncrowned King of the Kalahari. So great was his influence and prestige that he could have become a Hottentot chieftain had he so desired. In fact it is said that Witbooi actually offered him the rulership of one of his tribes, but Scotty was too fond of his independence to tie himself down in this way.

The war against the Hereros and the Hottentots was a ruthless struggle in which quarter was neither asked nor given. The Germans treated

their enemies with the greatest cruelty and severity in an effort to terrorise them into submission. After a number of fierce skirmishes, in which the chief, Marengo, greatly distinguished himself, the Hereros were eventually driven back and forced to retreat. Accompanied by their wives and families and driving vast herds of cattle before them, they retired to their stronghold in the Waterberg Mountains. There they prepared themselves for a last desperate stand against their enemies.

Then, much to their surprise, they were given a strange and unexpected respite. Faced with the long, drawn-out process of encircling their fortress and starving them into submission, Major Leutwein opened negotiations for a peaceful settlement. This, however, came to nothing as the German authorities strongly disapproved of his action. He was immediately relieved of his governorship and a much more ruthless man, General Von Trotha, was sent out to supersede him, with definite orders to bring

the revolt to an end as quickly as possible by force of arms.

On his arrival, Von Trotha lost no time in instituting a campaign of extermination. One of his first acts was to issue a proclamation which made his intentions brutally clear.

"Within the German border," it stated, "every Herero, with or without a rifle, with or without cattle, will be shot." And then with the aid of fresh reinforcements from Germany he made an all-out assault on the enemy stronghold. The famous Battle of the Waterberg followed on 11th August 1904. The Hereros fought with desperate courage and by nightfall that day the Germans had not yet reached their objective. After dusk, however, the embattled warriors reluctantly decided that further resistance would be useless. Under cover of darkness they fled through a gap in the encircling German lines and got safely away. But, as Fate willed it, they would probably have been no worse off had they stayed to fight it out.

A few, under their leader, Samuel Maherero, managed to find sanctuary in British Bechuana-land. The rest were either hunted down by the Germans or driven into the desert to die of starvation and thirst. Altogether about forty thousand Hereros are estimated to have perished in this way.

In the following year Prince Otto von Bismarck decided to adopt a more conciliatory policy. The extermination edict was repealed, Von Trotha was replaced by a civil governor, Herr Von Lindequist, and a general amnesty was proclaimed. In this way the remnants of the Herero tribe, about twelve thousand in number, were saved from annihilation.

In the meantime the Hottentots had refused to give in, and for some time they continued the unequal struggle on their own.

During these years of constant strife and long, drawn-out insurrection Scotty employed his private army mainly on cattle-raiding excursions against the Germans. But occasionally his men

were involved in actual skirmishes and on one occasion he inflicted on the Kaiser's soldiers what he afterwards claimed to be the greatest defeat which they suffered during the whole campaign. The Germans were inclined to be contemptuous of their primitive Hottentot foes and sometimes failed to take the necessary precautions while on the march. As a result it was comparatively easy to lead them into an ambush.

Once when Scotty's scouts reported that a fairly large body of the enemy was approaching, he hid his main force on both sides of a deep kloof and instructed his men not to shoot until he gave the signal. Then he sent a small detachment ahead to lure the Germans into the trap. This detachment played its part well. It opened fire on the advancing foe and when the latter retaliated it fled in apparent confusion into the kloof. The Germans were completely deceived. With yells of triumph they chased the fleeing Hottentots straight into the ambush. Suddenly Scotty and his men opened up from all sides. Taken by

surprise, the Germans suffered heavy casualties and were forced to retire in disorder.

On another occasion Scotty was engaged on a scouting expedition when he saw a convoy of about twenty German wagons, accompanied by a small escort, taking supplies to an outlying military post. Hidden from view he watched the convoy halt at a water-hole and prepare to outspan for the night. He was particularly interested in the disposition of the sentries. There were three small koppies overlooking the camp and Scotty noticed that a guard was posted on top of each of these vantage points.

He waited until it was dark and then rode off at full speed to where he knew Witbooi and a large band of his followers were resting. When he got there he told the chief of his discovery and together they selected about fifty well-armed Hottentots. These accompanied Scotty back to the German encampment. As soon as he approached it he warned them to move with the utmost caution in order not to alert the enemy.

Scotty's plan was to occupy the koppies overlooking the camp, but in order to do this it was essential to silence the sentries. He therefore halted his men a short distance away from the convoy and then with three bodyguards climbed the nearest koppie. Each bodyguard was armed with a dagger and his job was to plunge it into the sentry's heart if he made any noise while Scotty was overpowering and silencing him. Fortunately this was not necessary.

The four men crawled silently up the first hill, taking advantage of every bit of cover. Their intended victim failed to detect their presence and at last Scotty got so close that he was able to spring on the man's back. Throwing his powerful arm round the sentry's neck he stuffed a wad of sacking into the man's mouth and managed to stifle his still-born cry of alarm. Then securely binding him with thongs, Scotty warned him that if he made the slightest sound he would be instantly killed.

The ground here was too rough for the sentinels to meet at the end of their beats and

exchange the countersign as was the normal practice. One of Scotty's Witboois therefore took the captured man's place and shouted out the German password at the appropriate intervals.

The plan worked like clockwork and in this way each, of the sentries was in turn disposed of. Scotty then went down and brought up the main body of his followers and posted them on the three koppies, without the Germans below being any the wiser. At dawn the Hottentots opened fire and the startled Germans, taken completely unawares soon surrendered. Eventually, after being disarmed they were released.

Scotty had secured a rich booty in wagons, guns, ammunition and goods of all kinds. Some of these were given to Witbooi's followers and the rest he took across the border into British territory for safe keeping. Exploits of this kind naturally annoyed the Germans intensely and led to their offering a substantial reward for his capture, dead or alive.

In this connection it is worthy of note that, in several books by German authors dealing with these campaigns, numerous references are made to a mysterious white renegade who was frequently seen directing the Hottentot forces. These are obvious allusions to Scotty, and the military authorities eventually became so infuriated by the role he was playing in prolonging the fighting that they made more than one complaint to the Cape Government, complaints which went unheeded.

In one way Scotty Smith was extremely lucky. There were very few pitched battles during the Hottentot and Herero insurrections. Most of the fighting was of the guerrilla type, and he revelled in this kind of campaigning. But although his men did little serious fighting they were a perpetual thorn in the side of the enemy.

The one big weakness of the Hottentots was their lack of arms, ammunition and provisions. Scotty was their chief source of supply, and with his gang he smuggled a constant stream of these commodities to the rebels. In addition he would

raid the German horses and cattle during the night and then rush them over the frontier, across the Molopo River, and into the Colony. His stock lifting was so well organised and on such a vast scale that he soon found it necessary to establish a chain of cattle posts in various parts of the Kalahari. At these camps the cattle were fed and rested so that they would fetch good prices when they were sold on the open markets at Kimberley, Vryburg and Upington. These sales replenished his funds and it is ironic that German cattle supplied him with the sinews of war for carrying on the fighting against the German army.

Nearly all transport in the desert was by ox-wagon. Owing to the Hottentot wars this traffic increased enormously, and the German Commissariat Department was hard put to it to maintain the huge stocks of oxen, horses, mules and donkeys which it required for its wartime operations. With his freebooting instincts, this was much too good an opportunity for Scotty to miss, and he carried off large numbers of these

animals on their way to the various camps and dispersal depots in South West Africa. Moreover, when the German forces were on the move they were accompanied by long trains of transport wagons and every night huge encampments would be set up. These were almost impossible to guard properly and Scotty made full use of this fact.

German non-commissioned officers also paid frequent visits to the cattle markets at Upington, Kimberley and Vryburg. They bought stock for the army on a large scale. Scotty's gang would appropriate hundreds of these cattle on their way to South West Africa, manipulate their brands and then sell them back again to the same N.C.O.s. This was an extremely lucrative way of raising money while it lasted, and it might have continued indefinitely. Unfortunately for Scotty, it was exposed through a piece of sheer bad luck. At one of the camps where he kept the stolen cattle, a guard went down with sunstroke, and the cattle, breaking loose at just the wrong

moment, were seen by some of the non-commissioned officers.

The Hottentot resistance dragged on from year to year, but the odds against its leaders were too great. They were eventually crushed and forced to come to terms with their German conquerors. In 1907 peace at last descended on the troubled land. The Germans, however, had long memories, and they never forgave Scotty for the part he had played against them.

As the First World War approached, they also discovered that he was a spy in British pay and that he was sending extremely valuable reports of what was happening in South West Africa to Intelligence Headquarters. I have it on the authority of Mr H. J. E. Dumbrell, a former Director of Education in British Bechuanaland, that at least on one occasion they complained bitterly to the British authorities that George St Leger Gordon Lennox, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Shorty van Rooyen, had paid an unauthorised visit to the eastern part of their

territory, where he had been observed conducting himself in a highly suspicious manner.

When this official approach produced no tangible results, the Germans put a price of 20,000 marks on Scotty's head, and they made a number of determined efforts to lay their hands on him. They did not succeed, because he had learnt discretion with the years, and he did not again lightly risk his life by venturing into their territory.

Scotty was a brave man, but he never made the slightest attempt to disguise his fear of what the Kaiser's representatives would do to him if they managed to get him into their power. As late as 1913, for example, while on an expedition in the Kalahari with Major C.A. Anderson, the latter suggested that they should visit the Rietfontein police station and from there cross to the corresponding German frontier post in order to obtain a permit to shoot in that area. Scotty immediately replied, "You can cross the border if you like, Major, but I'm certainly not going to

accompany you. I'm much too valuable in the eyes of the squareheads to take any chances."

Scotty's attitude on this point is fully corroborated by Lieut-Colonel H.F. Trew, the Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Cape Western Area. In 1914 he met the outlaw while the latter was scouting in the Kalahari near the South West African boundary. Trew asked him whether he had been in German territory.

"No," Scotty emphatically answered. "I'm afraid to do so. The Germans have a price on my head, because of the damage I caused them during the Hottentot wars. They'd shoot me on sight if I gave them the slightest opportunity."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

While he was living at Leitland's Pan, Scotty's family gradually increased, until eventually he had five daughters and two sons. The outlaw was something of an autocrat and, when his daughters grew up, it must have taken a fair amount of courage to pay court to them.

Aspiring suitors never knew what kind of reception they were likely to receive from the old man!

Scotty himself once told a friend what happened when a young policeman called at his homestead in the Kalahari on a routine tour of inspection. These official visits were greatly appreciated by the isolated farmers in those days, as the mounted constables on their rounds gathered in all the local gossip, family talk and scandals and carried these with them from farm to farm.

Scotty was therefore justifiably annoyed when, having signed the young fellow's book, he found that the policeman was much more interested in one of the girls than he was in his host and soon abandoned him altogether in favour of his daughter's company. Now Scotty was not the man to brook this kind of slight with impunity. When the constable at last managed to tear himself away from his charming companion and prepared to take his departure, he was

amazed to find that his horse had mysteriously disappeared from the stable where he had left it.

Scotty was equally surprised, and not only emphatically disclaimed all knowledge of what had happened, but eagerly joined in the search for the missing steed. And then an amazing state of affairs was revealed. By some strange, fortuitous coincidence, all Scotty's horses had vanished into thin air at the same time, and he had not a single mount available to offer the unfortunate guardian of the law. In the end the latter was forced to walk the long way back to headquarters, through the desert sands in his heavy riding boots - an experience guaranteed to cure even the most ardent Romeo of his lovesickness. And, although he made the most searching enquiries, the policeman never recovered his horse. What had happened to it only Scotty and his Bushmen accomplices ever knew, and they never spoke about the matter.

It is not given to many people to become a legend during their own lifetime. Scotty, however, was one of the few men who achieved this

distinction. For nearly twenty years he lived on his farm at Leitland's Pan, and his isolation in the desert served only to enhance, if anything, his fame and reputation throughout the length and breadth of South-Africa. Soon, in fact, his name was so generally known that wherever he went he was treated with a mixture of fear and respect, which did nothing to allay the feeling of secret pride which he had in his own exploits. Even when he was quite an old man, people took care not to annoy or offend him. In his book, *Dragons are Extra*, for example, Major Hastings tells us that whenever Scotty happened to appear on the market square at Vryburg the toughest characters would either give him a wide berth or politely make room for him.

During his sojourn at Leitland's Pan, Scotty paid frequent visits to Upington. "He was such a public character," Mr Buchheimer, who was resident there at the time, informed me, "that as soon as he arrived, the news spread rapidly, 'Scotty's in town', and crowds would turn out to greet him as he passed."

Nor was Scotty's celebrity confined to the ordinary man in the street. His name had penetrated to the highest circles in the land, and leading South-African personalities were eager to make his acquaintance. Once, for example, soon after Union, the Governor-General was visiting Upington when he saw a distinguished-looking old man standing on the station platform. He made enquiries and, finding out that it was Scotty Smith, he immediately walked over, greeted him cordially and had a long conversation with him.

At the hotel, where he usually stayed when in town, Scotty was always assured of an appreciative audience eager to listen to tales of his various adventures and escapades. He had another attraction for the men who clustered round him in the local bar. Among his varied talents he was an expert at all kinds of card games, and he was also an adept at sleight-of-hand, as many unsuspecting strangers found to their cost.

Once in the Upington Hotel Scotty pulled off the old pea-and-thimble trick in order to confound a local farmer named Strauss. This man was notorious for his meanness, and for the way in which he dodged payment when it came to his turn to stand a round of drinks. One day Albert Jackson happened to be in Upington. He met Scotty at the hotel and the subject of Strauss's stinginess cropped up. Scotty thereupon bet his companion that he would force the old skinflint to pay for champagne for all those in the bar at the time.

Soon afterwards Strauss called in for his customary drink. He had never seen the pea-and-thimble trick before and fell for it. Scotty let him win once or twice to whet his appetite and then began to fleece him, while the spectators who were in the plot egged his victim on. So confident was the farmer of his ability to spot the pea that it was not until he had lost £5 that he desisted. Then to his intense disgust he saw Scotty order champagne all round and settle the account with the money he had just won.

On another occasion Scotty was standing in the street when two men approached. As they drew near, he heard one of them remark, " Isn't that Scotty Smith, who's supposed to be such an expert at card tricks?"

"Yes," his companion replied.

The man immediately went up to Scotty and shook hands with him.

"I understand you do all kinds of funny things with cards," he remarked. "Well, here's £20 which says you can't take *me* in," and he pulled some notes out of his pocket.

Scotty, of course, could not ignore this slur on his skill, so they adjourned to the hotel, where he produced a pack of cards and performed a trick which completely bamboozled his challenger. The latter was so annoyed that he refused to pay up and called Scotty's performance "a work of black magic". The latter was furious and demanded his money at once. When the man still would not honour his bet, Scotty adopted such a threatening attitude that his opponent suddenly

changed his mind and gave him the £20 without further ado.

Scotty went into the bar and stood drinks all round. He paid for them with the wager money. Then scooping up the change he took up his position near a shop, where he proceeded to distribute what was left of the cash to every aged Coloured man or woman who passed.

Scotty usually kept out of politics, but when an Upington hotel keeper named Koch offended his sense of patriotism, he did not hesitate to come into the open and register his vehement protest against his action, as will be seen from the following letter which he wrote to the local magistrate: "

Upington
Sunday, 27th January, 1895.

To the C.C. and R.M.
Sir,

In defiance of the Queen's regulations Mr Koch of the Upington Hotel insists on floating a foreign flag on

his flagstaff, which flagstaff is on the main street. Queen's regulations are explicit on this point. The Union Jack on top and a foreigner must place the flag of his country under if he wishes to put his flag up. Therefore I a British born subject and sworn defender of my Queen and country respectfully request you in the absence of the officer commanding the B.B.P. to have the obnoxious flag removed to prevent force.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
George St Leger Lennox."

In many ways Scotty Smith was a strange man, but perhaps the strangest thing of all about him was that he could treat some people in the most brutal and ruthless manner, and yet to others he would show outstanding kindness and consideration. Mr Herbert Steyn, who knew him well, described him, for example, as being "kind-hearted, sympathetic and vicious".

Probably he considered that anyone who was strong and fit was quite capable of fending for himself, whereas the young, the helpless and the forlorn invariably brought out the best in him and excited his most chivalrous instincts. The unselfishness with which Scotty went to the aid of those in distress was one of the more endearing traits of the rough old man's character, and it has done much to mellow his reputation as South-Africa's bad man, and to wipe out the memory of some of the evil deeds which he committed during his long and varied career outside the law.

Take, for example, the case of a certain Mr Brown, about which old-timers at Upington still occasionally talk. Brown was one of those nondescript individuals who wander aimlessly from place to place, destitute, friendless, and without anyone to turn to in time of need. When he arrived at Upington round the turn of the century no one knew where he had come from or anything about his antecedents. It was obvious only that he was in an advanced stage

of tuberculosis. The hotel keeper, taking pity on this stray piece of flotsam, gave him a bed for a night or two.

Scotty happened to come into town at this time and hearing about Brown went to see him. As he looked at the homeless hobo coughing his life away he realised that Uppington would probably be the man's last earthly port of call. He therefore summoned the proprietor and told him to keep Brown there as long as he lived and to see that he received every attention.

"I'll pay for his board," Scotty promised, "and for anything else he requires."

He next interviewed a local doctor, asked him to take Brown as a patient and agreed to be responsible for his fees and for any medicines which he might need. He also engaged two Coloured men to nurse him, so that he would have constant attention, day and night. In this way he brought some comfort into the man's last days on earth. A few weeks later the old fellow died and then this Good Samaritan, the villain of

a thousand dubious enterprises, ordered a fine coffin to be made for him, and paid all funeral expenses.

The story which follows, although it belongs to a much earlier period in Scotty's life, typifies his very genuine affection for young people and his readiness to go to their assistance when they were in trouble.

One day he was on a visit to Graaff-Reinet, and had taken a room at an hotel on the market square. It happened to be stock fair day and the place was crowded. That afternoon there was a heavy thunderstorm and the roads became practically impassable, so that most of the farmers and their wives had to spend the night in town.

At the hotel at which Scotty was staying there was a shy, modest, self-effacing youngster, not yet out of his teens. He was a very effeminate type and the last person in the world one would expect to become involved in an hotel brawl. Yet that was what happened to him.

After dinner the hotel guests adjourned to the sitting-room and an impromptu concert was held, during the course of which someone found out that the young man was a talented musician. He was immediately pressed to play for the gathering. At first he refused, but eventually he was persuaded to take his seat at the piano and was soon giving a fine presentation of some of the sentimental songs and melodies so popular in the Victorian era.

The audience was enjoying this impromptu concert when a big, surly brute got up and strode towards the piano. Shaking his fist in the young man's face he yelled:

"Stop that infernal noise. I've had enough of this rubbish. Stop it at once, d'ye hear?"

The poor musician was taken aback. "But, sir," he pleaded, "people asked me to"

"Don't argue with me," the bully roared. "When I say stop, you stop."

Without more ado he seized the unfortunate youngster by the back of the neck and hurled

him to the floor. There were angry murmurs of protest but the boy's assailant was a huge fellow and no one made a move.

It was then that Scotty stood up. Quietly he made his way to where the man was standing and looked him straight in the eye. Speaking very slowly and deliberately he announced: "We say we want that boy to play, and I say he shall play."

"Oh," said the man, mimicking Scotty, "you say you want the boy to play. I say he won't play. Now what are you going to do about that, Mister Smart Alec?"

Scotty soon showed him. Picking up a glass of beer, which was standing on an adjacent table, he hurled its contents into his face. With a roar of anger the bully attacked him, and a short but bloody fight took place. Before long Scotty managed to get in a hard jab to the stomach and followed this up with a perfect left to the jaw. His opponent crumpled and fell to the floor with all the fight knocked out of him. Scotty then

stooped down and seizing him by the scruff of the neck and the seat of the pants dragged him to the door and hurled him into the gutter.

"Now," he panted, "we say we don't want you back, and I say you won't come back. What're you going to do about it?"

With this parting shot, Scotty went up to the piano and, patting the youngster on the shoulder, said kindly, "It's all right, son, carry on. That fellow won't interfere with you again, I'll see to that."

Another interesting example of Scotty's chivalry and his detestation of bullies was told to me by Col. E. W. Woon, who was saved from an extremely embarrassing situation by the free-booter just over sixty-five years ago. To-day Col. Woon is living in retirement in East London, but when this incident occurred he was still a mere youngster, a corporal in the Cape Mounted Police.

In 1896 rinderpest swept through the Taungs-Vryburg districts, and cattle herds were almost

annihilated. In order to check the spread of the disease the police were instructed to destroy all infected animals. This led to a great deal of bitterness with the African tribesmen, and when some of Chief Galishwe's cattle were killed, his followers broke into open rebellion.

Police reinforcements were sent to restore order. Shots were exchanged and a fight took place at Border station in which Piet Gasibone, the chief's brother, was fatally wounded by a police sergeant. As a result the whole area was thrown into a state of alarm. There was fear of an attack on Mafeking and Vryburg and both these towns went into laager.

The position was relieved, however, when a detachment of the police and the Kimberley Regiment arrived at Pokwani. Only token resistance was encountered and the town was captured and burnt. Galishwe fled to the Langeberg and the rebellion collapsed.

At the conclusion of hostilities the Cape Mounted Police were shifted to Vryburg, where

they went into camp at the police headquarters on the outskirts of the town. On the day the men arrived they had had a long and tiring ride, and so that evening Woon and a fellow corporal decided to visit the local hotel for a drink. When they arrived there they ordered two beers. Standing at the counter was a sullen-looking, black-bearded man. He had a revolver strapped to his hip and they subsequently learnt that he was joining Dennison's Horse. For the past fortnight he had been living in the bar and had been drunk practically all the time. Apparently he was a devotee of Guinness stout and he must have had a certain amount of money because in those days it retailed in Vryburg at four shillings a bottle.

The man looked up as they came in and gave them an insolent stare. They took no notice as they were not looking for trouble. Unfortunately, however, the man was obviously in a truculent mood and spoiling for a fight. As the bartender poured out the beers, which they had ordered, the drunkard turned slowly round and deliberately

swept their glasses off the counter on to the floor.

Col. Woon smiled reminiscently as he recalled to mind that incident out of the far distant past.

"Quite candidly," he admitted to me, "my half-section and I didn't know what to do. After all it is a pretty deadly insult to upset a man's beer in this way. But we were in uniform and very keen on our profession and we didn't quite know to what extent we would be blamed if we were involved in a bar-room scrap. Moreover we were only youngsters, and although we were not exactly afraid of this big hulking brute, we knew in our hearts that we stood no chance against him. There he stood facing us, with an evil grin on his face and his great ham-like fists clenched, just waiting for one of us to make a false move. Fortunately, while we were still hesitating a miracle occurred and the matter was taken out of our hands.

"Sitting by himself in a corner of the bar was a tall, powerfully built man, whom we'd hardly noticed when we came in. Suddenly, moving with amazing agility for a man of his size, he appeared right behind our tormentor. He tapped the latter on the shoulder and the fellow swung round and squared up to him.

"Who the hell are you?" he demanded with an oath. 'I'm Scotty Smith,' was the reply, delivered with a broad accent and in the quietest of tones.

Col. Woon laughed. "'You know,' he said, 'after all these years, I'm still amazed when I think of the extraordinary transformation which took place in the bully's attitude. He turned pale, took a couple of steps backwards and then without uttering a word, he whirled round and almost ran out of the door. Scotty himself could not help smiling.

"'Och, mon,'" he said with a broad grin. "'That rubbish! I've shot half a dozen better men than yon, in fair :fight in the street outside this very pub '".

Scotty's boast can be taken with a grain of salt. But Corporal Woon and his companion never forgot the kindly stranger who so opportunely intervened in a matter which was no concern of his, just to save two youngsters from embarrassment and possibly a severe beating-up.

It was not only in these rather magnificent Beau Geste deeds of chivalry, however, that Scotty excelled. It was perhaps even more for his little, everyday acts of kindness and consideration that his memory is cherished by so many people.

When Scotty, spent the day with Fred Inggs at Draghoender on his way to the Cape it struck him that although he and his friends were drinking heavily, Mr Inggs had not touched a drop of liquor. He did not say anything at the time, but on his return trip he stopped at Draghoender and called on Inggs.

"I noticed," he told him, "that you don't drink, so I thought I'd bring you something nice

to eat from the Cape," and he handed over a box of delicious apples, which he had gone to the trouble of procuring for him.

Scotty, as I have pointed out, had a particularly soft spot for young people. This appears over and over again in the testimony of men and women who knew him personally. Mrs Else Gerber of Sea Point, for example, told me that her late husband came to South-Africa from Germany as a youth of eighteen in 1884. After he had been here a little while he heard that there were good prospects of making money in the Kalahari. With a young cousin he proceeded to Grootdrink, an isolated little place on the Orange River, inhabited in those days only by Bushmen. Here, Mr Gerber and his cousin built their primitive shop and acquired a few head of cattle.

One day a man rode up to the store and introduced himself as Scotty Smith. The two youngsters had never seen the outlaw before, but his reputation had preceded him. They were unable to conceal their trepidation that he might

take the few possessions they had managed to acquire. However their fears proved groundless. He immediately saw the effect he had had on them, and he went out of his way to put them at their ease.

"Don't worry, you fellows," he reassured them. "I can see you're poor, hard-working youngsters. Nothing'll happen to you. Your things are quite safe with me. I only rob the rich to help the poor." And he stayed at Grootdrink for a few days to see how they were getting on, before taking leave of them.

Here is another anecdote about Scotty which was related to me by Herbert Steyn. Once when Mr Steyn was on a hunting trip in the Kalahari he was living on the game he shot and was using tsamma melons to quench his thirst. Suddenly he came upon a sight he had never expected to see in the desert -a herd of cattle. They were Friesland-Jersey crossbred cows, about twelve in number, and were in excellent condition.

Mr Steyn immediately came to the conclusion that they had been stolen. He at once reported the matter to the police at Rietfontein and the sergeant in charge suggested that they might belong to Scotty Smith. It seems ironical that the law, which had so often had to hunt Scotty down for appropriating other people's stock, should now do its best to restore his property to him when it had been taken by someone else.

The sergeant got in touch with Scotty and he came more than seventy miles from Upington to examine the animals. They were his cattle all right and he was naturally grateful to Mr Steyn for being instrumental in their recovery. He therefore picked out the best cow and gave it to him as a present. But the latter refused to accept the gift.

"After all," he told Scotty, "it's the kind of thing anyone would do."

"All right," Scotty rejoined. "If you don't want it, keep it for your baby son." This Mr

Steyn did. The cow has long since died, but to-day the son is a well-known medical practitioner.

Mr Jim Hope of Stilcom in the Transvaal gave me this further delightful example of Scotty's kindness to children. Many years ago he met an old lady at Livingstone. Scotty Smith's name came up and she mentioned how she had once made his acquaintance at a large family gathering on a farm in the Kroonstad district. He was passing through at the time and was invited to stay for dinner.

"He was a very big man," she told Mr Hope, "with a huge red beard, and he sat next to me at table. I was shy and a little frightened because I knew he was Scotty Smith, the horse thief and highwayman. He had such nice kind manners and spoke such good English that I really liked him and he gave me a golden sovereign, a fortune for a child of nine."

There is no doubt, too, that Scotty frequently preferred to do good by stealth and to hide his

generosity under the cloak of anonymity. Take, for example, this story told to me by Mrs C. Schutz, a one-time resident of Upington, who is now living in Kimberley.

For some years there had been no rain in the Gordonia district. Times were hard and Scotty and the local priest were discussing the terrible famine that would ensue unless the drought broke and broke quickly. "You know, Scotty," said the priest, "I'm in a quandary what to do. My funds are almost exhausted and every day some of my flock come to me with the same pathetic tale, 'Father, we have no money and no food and our children are dying of starvation'."

Scotty did not say a word, and shortly afterwards his visitor left.

The next morning when the Father went to his church to say mass the first thing he saw was three large bags of kafir beans standing on his stoep. There was no indication where they had come from, but the priest knew that there was

only one man in Upington who could have put them there.

"It was a real Godsend," the priest confided to Mrs Schutz, "and it undoubtedly helped to save many young lives. I knew, however, that it would never do to enquire too closely into how Scotty had acquired them. In any case I was fully aware that if I rejected his gift it would mortally offend him and that was the last thing in the world I wanted. So I accepted the beans as a gift from heaven. I appeased my conscience with the recollection that Scotty never robbed the poor, but only the rich."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SCOUT AND INTELLIGENCE AGENT

After Galishwe's defeat at Pokwani and his subsequent flight to the Langeberg, he continued to cause the Cape authorities a great deal of trouble. In 1897, largely as a result of his incitement, the Africans in that area rose in rebellion and a force under Col. Dalgetty had to be sent to subdue them. Scotty's aid was again

enlisted and he did very valuable work for the expeditionary force as an intelligence agent and scout.

The rebellion, however, was easily suppressed. Galishwe fled to the Kalahari and a price of £500 was put on his head. In the desert he was hunted down by Capt. C. G. Dennison and eventually captured. He was tried at Kimberley and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

After the collapse of the Langeberg fighting, Scotty was able to return to his home at Leitland's Pan to resume his ordinary occupations. But not for long. Two years later, in 1899, the Anglo-Boer War broke out and he once more joined up and was assigned to British Intelligence.

In his capacity as a secret service agent, Scotty Smith had some remarkable experiences. Unfortunately, however, true to the traditions of that tight-lipped body, this is a part of his life about which we know little, and although he was usually prepared to talk about his other adventures he immediately lapsed into silence, even when he

was in his cups, if anyone was indiscreet enough to question him on this chapter in his career.

In spite of this, stray pieces of information have leaked out from other sources which give some indication of how invaluable his assistance must have been to the British High Command. In fact so successful was Scotty's espionage work that before long the Boers put a substantial price on his head and, when peace was made, the Cape Government, as a reward for his meritorious war record, decided to overlook his former misdeeds and grant him a free pardon.

The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener himself, evidently had a very high opinion of Scotty, and frequently gave him special commissions, when he was particularly anxious to gain information about the enemy's plans and intentions. The general seems to have had a particularly soft spot for the rough-and-ready frontiersman. Although a stern martinet himself and a model of circumspection, he was big enough to appreciate it when the old rogue actually had the audacity to cock a snoot at

military officialdom, as the following story shows.

Throughout the ages, people in authority have repeatedly expressed their weary exasperation at the long-winded, verbose reports written by their subordinates. Unfortunately the concise, cryptic despatch is as rare as it is felicitous.

Perhaps no one has quite equalled Julius Caesar's dramatic description of his victory over Pharnaces, King of Pontis, in 47 BC. : *Veni, vidi, vici*. (" I came, I saw, I conquered.") But there have been many similar attempts. There is, for example, the famous report of the British Admiral who, having gloriously overwhelmed the enemy's fleet in battle, wrote a laconic despatch to the Lords of the Admiralty in which he stated: "Enemy defeated. Their losses as per margin."

Scotty's humorous effort, although it referred to much less world-shaking events, deserves to rank with these terse gems from the past.

In the latter stages of the Anglo-Boer War, British Intelligence in South-Africa began to suspect that despatches from European countries inimical to the British cause were being sent to South West Africa and from there were being taken through the Kalahari to the various Boer commanders in an effort to strengthen their morale. This suspicion was confirmed when two of the enemy were shot and copies of such documents were found on their bodies. If promptly forwarded to headquarters the information in them would have been of great value to the Commander-in-Chief. Unfortunately this had not been done and Scotty and some other scouts were now given peremptory instructions to search the bodies of any of the enemy whom they shot and to send anything found on them immediately to military headquarters.

Shortly afterwards a report from Scotty arrived. It read: "Monday, March 15th. Patrolled in the neighbourhood of Rietfontein. Two of the enemy opened fire on me. One had £1 7s 6d, in his pockets. Remitted herewith."

After closely studying this trenchant communication, Kitchener remarked to one of his officers, "By gad, Sir, that's the finest cryptic: message I've ever received. "

And then he added with a wistful smile, "I wish some of my staff would emulate Scotty Smith's example. "

One of the rare occasions on which Scotty was in an expansive mood and prepared to talk about his Anglo-Boer war experiences was during his expedition in the Kalahari with Major Anderson. They had had a long but satisfying trek, and were sitting round the camp fire one evening, pleasantly relaxed after a delicious supper, in which gemsbok steaks had been the *piece de resistance*, when Scotty leaned back, stretched himself, and suddenly remarked to his companion:

"You know, Major, during the war the enemy was after my blood and I had some pretty narrow shaves. Soon after hostilities started a number of men living in the desert and

surrounding areas formed a commando and one of the first things they did was to plan an attack on my place at Leitland's Pan.

"Fortunately I was forewarned. Unknown to the commando my Bushmen followers had shadowed their movements and had kept me informed of their intentions. When my spies told me that the raid was imminent, I abandoned my house. Leaving my kraals stocked with cattle as a bait, I retired into the desert with my private army of about two dozen Hottentots, all of whom I had trained to be dead shots. That night the commando arrived and took possession of my property.

"We had not, however, retreated far. By dawn I had posted my small force on the highest dunes overlooking the Boer encampment. As soon as it was light and the enemy began to stir, I opened the proceedings by firing the first shot at the man whom I recognised as their leader. He fell mortally wounded. This was the pre-arranged signal for my soldiers to shoot: The effect was so devastating that the

commando broke and fled, leaving behind two wagons loaded with rifles, ammunition and stores, all of German make."

Scotty paused, took a sip of the hot cocoa mixed with tsamma juice, which they invariably drank as a nightcap, and then continued, "I realised, of course, that as soon as the news of what had happened leaked out a much larger body would be sent to recapture my place. So I thought it prudent to evacuate Leitland's Pan while I still had the chance. Accompanied by my small army and taking with us my cattle, wagons and other goods I therefore retired to Upington, where I handed over the plunder I had captured to the military authorities. I was then commissioned to form a body of Coloured scouts. By this time my enemies had grown considerably in strength. They now numbered two to three hundred men, and they let it be known that if they captured me or any of my followers they would shoot us.

"That, of course," he added significantly, "cut both ways."

Scotty lapsed into silence and stared meditatively into the glowing embers of the fire: It looked as though he had come to the end of his reminiscences, for the time being at any rate. Fortunately, however, Major Anderson had got to know his man, and so he carefully refrained from asking him any questions or trying to lead him on. This would have been anathema to Scotty and he would immediately have retreated into his shell. Instead the Major contented himself with passing a few complimentary remarks about the incident, and after a while his discretion was rewarded.

Scotty got up, put some more wood on the fire and then, resuming his seat, related another yarn how he had once escaped capture by the skin of his teeth.

"Late one afternoon," he recalled, "I was out scouting with my Hottentots along the north bank of the Orange when I spotted two men watering their horses some distance down the river on the opposite side. This place was densely covered with thorn trees, and I suspected

that a commando was hidden in the vicinity. So, keeping well under cover, we made a detour to reach a high piece of ground overlooking this point. When we got to our objective I looked carefully out, but we had evidently not been cautious enough. The commando had seen us and some of its men were already crossing the river at a drift higher up in order to cut off our escape route to Upington, while others were fording the Orange lower down to prevent our retreat in that direction.

"We were now in a critical position, because it was obvious that these two detachments would soon combine in an all-out attempt to capture us. There was, however, one thing in our favour. The sun was just about to set and I reckoned that it would be dark before the attack could be carried out. This might help us to elude our assailants if only I could find a short cut down to the river. I hadn't much time but I crawled around until I discovered just what I was looking for a narrow, precipitous track. We managed to head our horses down this until we reached the

river's edge. We then swam them through to the opposite bank.

"We were now out of immediate danger, but before leaving the place I sent one of my men to reconnoitre the commando's encampment. He returned after a while and reported that only a few men had been left behind to guard the camp. They were busy cooking their supper, and were quite unsuspecting of our presence.

"It sounded very tempting," Scotty admitted with a reminiscent smile. "But I had strict instructions to watch the movements of the commandos and not to fight unless it was absolutely necessary, so we did not molest them. Instead we rode safely back to Upington, where I presented a full report to the military authorities."

After Major Anderson had related the above incident to me, he commented, "This episode is, I think, typical of Scotty, and demonstrates his courage, resourcefulness and quick thinking

when hard pressed, all qualities which must have got him out of many a tight corner."

The Anglo-Boer War story, however, which I like best about Scotty, is the one which illustrates his essential humanity, the occasion when he returned a life for a life. Piet de Villiers and Scotty Smith had known one another for a long time and were good friends. But, as happened so often during that tragic struggle, they suddenly found themselves on opposite sides.

Piet, in charge of a small commando, had been out scouting and was riding across the Kalahari in the vicinity of Areachap. His men were making their way towards an isolated farm house when, as they travelled silently over the sand dunes, they suddenly sighted a man in the distance. He was moving about among some small bushes, and as they got closer Piet recognised him. It was Scotty Smith, and for once he had been caught in the open with nowhere to hide.

He, however, kept his head. Completely ignoring the approaching commando he began diligently searching in the scrub for some imaginary object. The old scout was completely at Piet de Villiers' mercy, but the latter, because of their longstanding friendship and with a magnanimity that does him credit, instructed his men to pretend not to see the outlaw and so they rode past him to the farm house.

Piet was much amused at Scotty's bluff and he himself displayed a delightful sense of humour. Having reached the homestead he told the owner to send a message to Scotty warning him to be more careful in future not to loose things in the bushes, as this was a dangerous pastime and might, if it happened again, lead to his being shot.

About a fortnight later Piet was again out on a scouting expedition. With a couple of men he passed down the dusty, sandy bed of a river, in which there were a number of dried-up wells. As this small band rode unconcernedly along they little knew that standing in one of the wells

was a man with a rifle trained on Piet. That man was Scotty Smith, and he had his finger on the trigger when he suddenly saw who the leader was. Lowering his gun he let the party pass without firing a shot, in gratitude for Piet's having spared his life.

The sequel throws an interesting light on Scotty's ingrained reticence. Although he met Piet on several occasions after the war, for more than a dozen years he kept his own counsel about how he had once held his life in his hands.

During the 1914 Rebellion, Piet de Villiers was second-in-command to General Manie Maritz, one of the rebel leaders. And it was only after he had been captured and then released that Scotty for the first time mentioned the fact that he had been hidden in the well, with orders to shoot, when Piet and his patrol had passed.

Soon after he had been set free, Piet returned to Upington and Scotty went to call on him.

"Hullo, Kaiser Bill," he called out jocularly. "The King of England comes to greet His Imperial Majesty. And if it hadn't been that you let me go at Areachap, I'd have shot you dead when you passed the well that day. But after what you'd done for me, how could I?"

An ironical result of the Boer War was the fact that because of the services which he had rendered the British cause, Scotty was not only, as I have mentioned, given a free pardon but was actually made a justice of the peace at Leitland's Pan. In those days a J.P. had considerably more judicial powers than he has to-day, and Scotty really enjoyed himself exercising magisterial authority over the Hottentots, Basters and Bushmen who came under his jurisdiction. But it must often have tickled the old brigand's sense of humour that the man who had so frequently clashed with the law should now be its upholder and administrator.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BUSHMAN BONES

Scotty Had A Finger in many pies and possessed a restlessness of spirit which took him too many strange places. Just after the Anglo-Boer War, for example, he became interested in what is known as the Ghansi Trek, one of those minor race migrations which have more than once led a section of the people of South-Africa to abandon their farms and seek the Promised Land in some other, far-distant part of their country. A few years before the war broke out, this inherent urge to trek had taken possession of a few Free State Boers and their families.

The leading person behind the move was a member of the Volksraad, Count Drotsky, whose idea it was to found a European settlement in Northern Bechuanaland near Lake Ngami. Cecil Rhodes was approached and he agreed to finance the scheme. As a preliminary step a small band of men was sent to spy out the

law. They returned with a report that the country was suitable for farming and seven families eventually set out under the leadership of Count Drotsky's son. Unfortunately they lost their leader, who died from malaria on the way, but they managed to obtain large estates and settled down at a place called Ghansi.

Scotty, who had his own sources of information, and had heard about the trekkers, now decided to follow them up in order to see how they were getting on. He therefore undertook the long journey to Ghansi, where he made the acquaintance of two Australian adventurers who had served in the colonial forces during the Anglo-Boer War.

These two men, after securing their release from the Army, had bought a small buck wagon and a span of oxen in which they had travelled from De Aar to Johannesburg. There they had sold the buck wagon and oxen and had purchased a light spring wagon and some donkeys. Then they had set out for Ghansi, which they had reached safely after an arduous

trip. On their arrival at the new settlement they found that the trekkers were in a bad way. They were fever-stricken and without many of the bare necessities of life. Their biggest problem was the fact that the nearest market was at Vryburg, four hundred miles away.

Scotty and the Australians soon became friends, and feeling sorry for the settlers they agreed to take their surplus cattle northwards in an attempt to dispose of them. The three men set out and, largely through Scotty's knowledge of the country, were able to reach Maun on the Okavambo swamps. From Maun they made their way to the Zambezi River and then across to Northern Rhodesia. There they managed to sell the cattle, after which they returned to Ghansi. Some time later Scotty bade farewell to the settlement and trekked south, but the two Australians decided to remain behind. They married Ghansi girls and eventually became very wealthy men.

Back again in the South Kalahari, Scotty picked up the threads of his normal life and

reverted to his cattle-raiding, smuggling and horse-stealing activities. Once, for example, he wanted to run a cargo of brandy across the frontier into South West Africa, where he knew that it would have a ready sale among the Hottentots. He chose the border near Rietfontein for this purpose. But the Cape police were suspicious and he received the tip that they were waiting for him to make a false move.

Scotty was wondering how to evade them when one of his Hottentot spies reported that another bootlegger intended taking a consignment of liquor over the frontier some miles to the north. The old outlaw was annoyed as he considered that this man was poaching on his preserves. And so he decided to kill two birds with one stone to transship his cargo safely across the border and at the same time to teach his rival a lesson.

He therefore went to see the, Rietfontein magistrate, Major Herbst, whom he knew well. Quite casually, in the course of conversation, he

passed on the information he had received about his rival. Major Herbst, who had been waiting for a long time to catch these brandy runners, fell into the trap. He sent all the available police to intercept the smuggler at the spot indicated, leaving the frontier near Rietfontein open for Scotty to get his cargo safely across. In after years the Major, who had a keen sense of humour, bore Scotty no grudge but used to take a delight in telling his friends how the old rogue had deceived him.

In 1909 Scotty Smith abandoned his homestead at Leitland's Pan and within a few years it had gone back to the desert. The sand had claimed its' own and there was hardly a sign to show where the house had stood for so many years.

Scotty now acquired an irrigation erf at Upington, on which he erected a simple cottage overlooking the Orange River. There he resided until his death in 1919. On this erf he grew vegetables and fruit, cultivated wheat and lucerne, and kept his cattle and sheep. During his

lifetime a good deal of money had passed through Scotty's hands, but he was a prodigal spender and made little effort to save any of it. Moreover his persistent attempts to make a lucky gold or diamond strike also proved unavailing and so he spent his last few years in somewhat straitened circumstances.

There was one very peculiar feature about the house which Scotty built for himself in Upington. It had only one door and this faced the river, not the street. There was an excellent reason for this. In his old age Scotty dreaded the thought that he might be pestered by journalists, writers, and other inquisitive strangers who wanted to poke their noses into his past. In addition, he had no time for ministers of religion, and he was haunted by the fear that they might want to visit him in order to save his soul and convert him to a new way of life.

By constructing only one door to his house he hoped to reduce these possible intrusions to a minimum. Mrs Schutz, who gave me this explanation for the somewhat unconventional design

of the building, added that Scotty also kept a number of dogs to frighten away unwelcome visitors.

At Upington there was a Roman Catholic Mission Station, run by the Society of St Francis de Sales, which did excellent work among the Hottentots, Basters and other Coloured races in the area. Closely associated with this institution were two people, whom I have previously mentioned, the priest in charge and Mrs Schutz. Mrs Schutz, before her marriage, was the teacher at the mission school. The priest in charge was by birth a Frenchman. He was a man of good family, well educated, well read, and with wide human sympathies.

Scotty was not a church-goer and there was only one notable exception to his almost pathological distrust of parsons. This was the priest, who had the entree to Scotty's house at any time.

It was a strange friendship which had developed between the man of God and the

incurable old sinner. But they had the most sincere liking and respect for one another, and although they were so dissimilar in many ways they had one thing in common. They were both great lovers of horses.

Often this incongruous pair would spend hours together discussing their mutual interest in horse-flesh, and then the priest would give the outlaw a glimpse into his early life and career: And Scotty, in turn, would confide to the minister some of his more exciting and picturesque experiences.

Scotty Smith spent the last years of his life in retirement on his erf at Upington, but the outlaw's idea of retirement and that of most other people must have differed considerably. He still had sufficient reserves of energy, for example, to take an extremely active part in yet another war and to act as a guide to various desert expeditions. In a way Scotty was lucky, because these activities kept him out of a good deal of mischief, against which even his advancing years would probably have proved no safeguard.

In 1910, shortly after he had settled at Upington, Kalahari Bushman skeletons suddenly achieved tremendous scientific importance. There was an unprecedented demand for their acquisition on the part of museums and similar institutions throughout the world, and Scotty found himself in the position of being the ideal man to meet the demand. In fact he gained practically a monopoly of this strange, bizarre trade.

The outlaw was not, of course, the first man in South-Africa to search for Bushmen relics. For many years sporadic attempts had been made to acquire good specimens of these primitive people. But it was not until Dr L. Peringuey, the Director of the South-African Museum in Cape Town, became interested in the matter that a proper search was instituted.

Soon after the close of the Anglo-Boer war, Dr Peringuey wrote to various people throughout the country whom he thought might be able to supply him with suitable skeletons, and in this way he managed to obtain some of his

requirements from Plettenberg Bay, Grahams-town, Carnarvon, Rietfontein and other parts of South-Africa.

Dr Peringuey was an ardent scientist and-in his enthusiasm to gain as much data as possible he missed no opportunity of securing suitable skeletons which would help him in his researches. He even kept an eye on the reports of police court proceedings in the newspapers. In April, 1910, for example, he noticed that a Bushman named Leelyk had been sentenced to death at the Victoria West Circuit Court Sessions for murder. He therefore formally applied for permission to acquire his body after the execution. But while the various legal implications of this application were still under consideration the Governor of the Cape made a decision unnecessary by commuting the condemned man's sentence to one of life imprisonment.

At this stage another well-known scientist and medical practitioner came to the aid of the Director. This was Dr W. M. Borchers, who was in practice at Upington at the time, and

who appears to have been one of the first people to have realised the vast potentialities of the Kalahari Desert as a treasure house of Bushman bones. In a letter from Upington, dated 2nd May 1910, and addressed to Dr Peringuey, Dr Borchers wrote:

"Yesterday Mr St Leger Geo. Lennox came back from 150 miles beyond Mier's Country, i.e. about 350 miles from here. He was in search of diamonds but did not find Anderson's diamonds described in his book, *25 Years in an Ox-Wagon*. He has brought down eight complete skeletons of Bushmen ... Dr Porch, a scientist from Vienna, commissioned Mr Lennox to get some more for him, giving him £7 10s. each made up as follows: £5 for a complete skeleton and £2 10s. for expenses. Dr Porch got a lot of specimens from a farm Kurego in Gordonia and seven from Mr Lennox. The South-African Museum can have them at the same price ... Mr Lennox lived at Leitland's Pan in this district for some thirty

years among the Bushmen and knows more about them than anyone else.... "

As a result of this letter Dr Peringuey decided to make use of Scotty Smith's services to secure specimens for his own institution. But first the matter had to be legalised. Scotty was therefore advised to apply for a permit from the magistrate at Upington, authorising him to exhume Bushman skeletons for the South-African Museum. He did this and then, without much difficulty, managed to find five Khoma Bushman skeletons which he sent off to Dr Peringuey.

It was on this occasion that he came across the grave of the famous chief, Marengo, who had played such a prominent part in the Herero struggle for independence against the Germans. Marengo was not of course a Bushman. He was a true Herero, but his skeleton was of great historical interest and Scotty intended, apparently, to add it to his collection. Unfortunately for him, however, he had been forestalled. The grave had already been violated and the heads

of both Marengo and his wife had been removed by some unknown person.

It is a popular belief that Scotty made a very good thing out of this rather sinister business while it lasted. But this is not correct, and on some trips he found it difficult to recover his expenses. For his five Khoma skeletons, for example, he received only £17 10s, a sum which hardly met his costs, and certainly did not recompense him for the trouble which he had taken to preserve them.

"I was twenty days away," he wrote to Dr Peringuey, "collecting them with wagon, three boys and one horse. The sand is sifted and gone over for the smallest bones. They are as complete as skeletons can be got. The bones are fumigated, then immersed in a solution of creolin and sun dried. 70s. each does not cover the expense incurred getting them ..."

In spite of these poor payments, Scotty continued with the work and soon he had no lack of clients. As the news spread that

Bushman skeletons were readily available in the Kalahari, other museums and scientific institutions became eager to secure suitable specimens. He is known to have supplied skeletons to the Kimberley and Albany museums as well as to such famous overseas institutions as the Berlin Museum. With the increased demand the price, too, rose slightly.

As I have mentioned before, the fact that Scotty appeared to have no difficulty in executing these orders soon set people's tongues wagging. The popular and most widely believed explanation of Scotty's business was that he simply shot the required number of Bushmen whenever he needed their skeletons.

But Scotty had a different and much more plausible explanation of how he obtained his apparently unlimited supplies. He pointed out that at one time the Cape police, anxious to make his closer acquaintance, had often employed Bushmen trackers to follow his trail. Knowing that this was happening, and realising that unless he rid himself of these human

bloodhounds his fate would be sealed, he would lie in wait and pick them off as they appeared on his trail. This in itself was a notable achievement, because the suspicious little men of the desert were the most difficult of all human beings to ambush. Scotty buried the Bushmen in convenient sand dunes and, according to him, it was these skeletons which he was exhuming.

Some of Scotty's acquaintances, however, held other views. They believed that his friends among the little yellow people had shown him their secret cemeteries and that, when the need arose, he simply raided these. Unfortunately for this belief, however, the Bushmen did not have common burial grounds but simply interred their people wherever they died.

On one scientific trip to the Kalahari, sponsored by the Cape Government, Scotty was appointed guide and transport rider. This expedition was not primarily concerned with Bushmen relics but its members could not help noticing that, on three different evenings after making camp, Scotty rode off on his pony and

disappeared into the desert. He would return much later with a bulging sack, which he packed into one of the wagons. His companions were naturally curious to know what was in the bags, but Scotty resolutely refused to say anything about them.

At last one night, when they were sitting round the camp fire, he suddenly decided to satisfy their curiosity.

"If you really want to know what's in those sacks," he remarked, "I'll show you. Come with me."

He led them to the wagon, took off a sack and opened it. It was full of bones.

"I heard recently in Kimberley," he casually explained, "that the Cape Museum was offering £5 for a Bushman skull and £15 for a complete skeleton. I've got three lots in there."

Colonel Trew also tells the story of how a friend of his once spent three months in the Kalahari with Scotty doing intelligence work. One evening, as they were preparing to camp, Scotty

asked if he could take the wagon a little way off the track as he had shot three Bushmen some years before in that neighbourhood and had buried their bodies in a sand dune. He now wanted to recover them because he had seen in a newspaper that the Grahamstown Museum was offering £5 10s. for specimens. He then went off, dug up the skeletons and put them in a box which he intended sending off as soon as they got back to civilisation.

Scotty's trade continued unabated for about two years. Then the Cape Provincial Government decided to call a halt to it, before the Kalahari was completely denuded of Bushmen bones. And so in July 1912, the Provincial Secretary got in touch with Dr Peringuey.

"The Resident Magistrates of Upington, Griquatown and Kuruman," he wrote, "have been advised of the withdrawal of 'Scottie' Smith's permit to exhume Bushman skeletons in the Kalahari, and have been asked to assist you in getting the permit cancelled."

This edict brought the business to a sudden end, and Scotty lost a steady, if somewhat poorly paid, source of remuneration. By this time, however, he had achieved such a reputation as a guide that he had no difficulty in supplementing his meagre income in other ways. In fact during the next ten years his services were eagerly requisitioned by a variety of people who, for one reason or another, wished to make a journey into the Kalahari.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

KALAHARI GUIDE

Scotty's career as a Kalahari guide brought him into contact with many interesting personalities. Perhaps his most unusual customers were Miss Dorothea Bleek who, with her father Dr W. H. I. Bleek, was a world authority on the Bushman language and culture, and Miss Maria Wilman, the Director of the Kimberley Museum. The Bleek-Wilman expedition set out from Upington, with Scotty as its guide, towards the end of 1910, and it

spent some weeks in the desert, studying the little yellow men and their mode of life.

It was a peculiar combination, the two dedicated women scientists and the old reprobate who had featured in so many dubious scrapes and escapades. Although the trip was a trying one Scotty behaved in an exemplary manner and took the two ladies exactly where they wanted to go. But over half a century later I heard a most interesting sidelight on the expedition, which just goes to show the unusual problems that can arise - even in the desert - when two women of strong personality are travelling together.

One day when Scotty was lying on his deathbed, Mrs Schutz went to see him. After a while their talk turned to the supposed lost city of the Kalahari, a topic in which they were both extremely interested. More to cheer him up than for any other reason, Mrs Schutz remarked, "Look, Scotty, next time you make a trip into the Kalahari you must take me along."

He chuckled. "Ah," he said. "Ladies. Yes, I once took two of them with me and I won't forget that journey in a hurry. They were both very determined ladies, and I had quite a job with them. The one asked for early morning tea, and the other insisted on coffee. One day the cook boy came to me and objected because of the extra work involved. I didn't mind about that, but it was summer time and we had to be very careful of our water supply as there was no means of replenishing our vats once they were empty:

"I always carried a quantity of salt with me on these expeditions, in case I shot any animals and wanted to preserve their skins, so now I gave the boy certain instructions : 'Tomorrow, make both tea and coffee as usual and then put a large spoon of salt in the tea. But if you let out that I told you to do this I'll skin you alive.' Why did I salt the tea?" Scotty gave a sly grin. "Well, you see, I prefer coffee myself."

"And what happened then?" Mrs Schutz asked him.

He pulled a wry face. "There were ructions the next morning," he admitted, "and the poor cook boy got it hot from one of the ladies. For the life of me I can't remember now which one it was. However, I made some remark about the effect of the sun on the water and the tea. 'The scientific lady couldn't quite understand why it should only affect the tea and not the coffee. But it solved our problem. After that we had no morning tea. We only had coffee and peace.'"

In 1913 Major C. A. Anderson, who is now living at Marandellas in Southern Rhodesia, spent two and a half months travelling with Scotty in the Kalahari Desert. He confirmed that Scotty was extremely reticent by nature and bitterly resented being questioned about his past life. As their friendship ripened, however, his reserve thawed and sometimes, over the camp fires at night, he would tell the most thrilling stories about an exciting and varied career.

Major Anderson is an authority on the underground water resources of South-Africa. At one time he was an inspector in the Water Boring

Branch of the Union Government and it was in this connection that he was first brought into contact with Scotty.

In his official capacity, Major Anderson pioneered the discovery and development of underground water supplies in many parts of the country. In 1913 he was sent by the Government to the Kalahari with instructions to select suitable sites for boreholes so that those arid areas could be opened up for settlers.

The Upington magistrate was asked to provide a guide and he strongly recommended Scotty. The latter was therefore engaged and was commissioned to supply a travelling wagon, six oxen and two riding horses for the trip. With these he was to meet Major Anderson at Upington on a given date.

These preliminary matters having been settled, the Major proceeded by train to the railhead at Prieska and from there by post cart to Upington. Scotty was waiting at the hotel for him with the riding horses. They lunched

together and after a few drinks to cement their new partnership they rode down to the house, where Scotty showed him round his erf, and the small land of wheat which he irrigated from the Orange River. Major Anderson was then introduced to his wife, and they had coffee in the front room.

After a while Scotty left to fetch the wagon for Major Anderson's inspection, while his wife retired to the kitchen to bake rusks for the Kalahari trip. And then an incident occurred which led to Scotty's giving Major Anderson a description of his early life and career. This, while it throws new light on the subject, differs in some very material respects from the account that he subsequently related to other friends, and which I have reproduced in Chapter One of this book.

Lying on a table in the front room was a large, old fashioned photograph album. Left to himself and with nothing much to do, Major Anderson picked it up and began paging idly through it.

Almost at once his interest was aroused by what he saw.

"As a result, when Scotty returned," Major Anderson informed me, "I was gazing at the photo of a very handsome woman mounted, side saddle, on a magnificent horse, and in the background was a castle with the abutments and other architecture typical of Scotland.

"Scotty said, 'Are you having a look at the old family pictures?'

"I replied, 'What a fine horse and isn't this an old Scottish castle?'

"'Yes, that was my home' he answered. 'I trained that horse for my sister. Her husband was the Ambassador to Russia. But come and have a look at the wagon.'

"I had heard that Scotty had a title. The photograph and what he actually told me later on one night over a camp fire when he was in a chatty mood, seemed to corroborate this. He informed me then that he had trained as a vet in Edinburgh. After qualifying he had joined a

cavalry regiment as a veterinary officer. This regiment was sent out to South-Africa during one of the Kafir wars.

“Before the ship arrived at Cape Town all the horses were brought on to the upper deck for re-shoeing. The weather was very rough and the smiths had a lot of trouble with some of the animals. This was particularly so with the colonel's charger. Scotty was a past master at handling horses, and after one of the smiths had been badly kicked he took over. He first quietened the animal and then shod it himself. His nickname in the regiment after this exhibition of skill became 'Scotty the Smith'. He told me that that was why he adopted the name of Scotty Smith instead of using his real name of George St Leger Gordon Lennox in his subsequent career as an outlaw.

"He also explained that he had resigned his commission in the cavalry regiment and had made his way to Kimberley after the first rush. He pegged a claim but it was un-payable. It was at this time that he received a letter from

his family lawyers to say that his father had died and that he must return immediately as the estate was deeply involved by the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank, in which his father had been a large shareholder. This was before the days of limited liability companies, and the claims against the estate were so heavy that nothing was left. He then returned to Kimberley and got mixed up in the I.D.B. business. Whether he was actually the legal heir to an estate and a title is open to doubt. I have reason to believe, however, that Scotty was recognised as being a member of the Gordon Lennox family. Some years ago while lunching with a regular army colonel I mentioned having shot an Oryx when travelling in the Kalahari with an old outlaw named Scotty Smith.

"The colonel replied, 'That's interesting, I'll tell you a story about him. In the early days of the Rand my brother-in-law was proceeding from Kimberley to Johannesburg by stage coach. They stopped for the night at a wayside hotel in the Free State. The hotel keeper told my brother-

in-law that he would have to share a room with a man called Scotty Smith who had a very bad record and he advised him to place all his money and valuables under his pillow. He did this and went to sleep.

"About midnight he was awakened by Scotty's entering the room and lighting the candle. My brother-in-law jumped up as the flame shone on the newcomer's face. He was certain that he had seen him before. The two men gaped at each other for a minute, and then discovered they were cousins. Their last meeting had taken place many years before.'

"This tale, in conjunction with the photos I personally saw in the old album, proved that Scotty was certainly a recognised member of his family. I may also add that in spite of his transgressions against the law he was not a criminal in the ordinary sense of the word. And the hotel keeper's advice to the colonel's brother-in-law to place his money and valuables under his pillow was quite uncalled for."

After Scotty had returned to his house with the wagon and oxen, which Major Anderson duly inspected and found satisfactory, they agreed to begin their journey early on the following morning. The Major had a good deal to do in the meantime. He had to see the Upington magistrate about a number of details connected with the trip and he also had to lay in an adequate stock of goods and provisions, enough to last for the two or three months which he anticipated they would be in the desert.

On Scotty's advice he purchased, among other things, a bag of salt, and a plentiful supply of sugar, coffee and twist tobacco. The two men intended doing a good deal of shooting for the pot and the salt was essential for making biltong. The tobacco would come in useful for bartering for wild animal skins and karosses from the Coloured hunters belonging to the settlement at Rietfontein.

These stores were delivered to the hotel and the next day Major Anderson rose early. The expedition, however, was fated to have an

unpropitious start. Scotty failed to turn up! At first the Major thought that he had been delayed. But when time passed and neither he nor the wagon materialised, Major Anderson began making enquiries, and it was not long before his eyes were opened to the true state of affairs. It was the hotel barman who enlightened him, and at the same time gave him quite a shock.

“You see, sir,” he explained, “when Scotty goes on a trip like this he always makes a few private arrangements of his own. Yesterday he bought a case of brandy.”

The barman, who knew his Scotty better than Major Anderson did at that stage, shook his head sadly. “It’s very unlikely, sir,” he solemnly assured him, “that you’ll see him again before he’s finished the case, and that’ll probably take him several days. There’s nothing you can do about it.”

Major Anderson, however, did not agree. He had made up his mind to begin the expedition that day and he was determined not to allow a

little thing like this to stop him. He therefore mounted his horse and rode down to Scotty’s house to find out exactly what had happened. He knocked on the door and Mrs Smith opened it. But let me continue the story in Major Anderson’s own words: “I asked her where her husband was, and she replied, ‘He’s very sick.’

“My answer was, ‘You mean he’s very drunk,’ and I pointed over her shoulder.

“She turned round and saw that the door between the bedroom and the front room was wide open. I could see Scotty stretched out on his bed in a drunken slumber, with a bottle of brandy and a glass on a table alongside his couch. I then asked her to call the Coloured driver, which she did. I told him to bring the Wagon round to the hotel about 4 p.m. to load the stores, and that we would then return and pick up Scotty. The driver laughed, and said that as soon as we got on to the veld, ‘The old master will revive.’

This statement I found to be perfectly true. Everything went according to plan. During the night I rode ahead of the wagon, leading Scotty's horse. About daylight, some twenty miles from Upington, we arrived at the first outspan. A fire was made and early coffee brewed. While I was soaking a rusk in my coffee and eating it, I heard a movement in the tented wagon. When I looked in, Scotty was awake and sitting up. He then climbed out, glanced round the landscape, and said, 'This is Areachap. I don't recall getting on the wagon to come here.'

"To this I replied, 'Quite so. You were lifted on to it when dead drunk.'

"'Damn it,' he rejoined. 'Now I remember climbing into that brandy. This is the worst jag I've been on for years. I must apologise. The craving only gets me occasionally and never when I am out on the veld.'

"This I also discovered was an actual fact. I had a case of whisky in the wagon. I had purchased it in Upington primarily to make a hot

drink at night before going to bed, as I knew the temperature in the Kalahari in winter fell abruptly to freezing point after sundown. On Scotty's advice I had also bought a good supply of cocoa before leaving Upington as he had told me it went well with tsamma juice and was an ideal warming drink on cold nights.

"Tsamma, as you may know, is a wild species of melon that grows on the dunes in the Kalahari. To extract the juice it is cut into slices, placed in a pot and boiled. The hot juice is then strained and this liquid is used in place of fresh water. There are two varieties, one sweet and the other intensely bitter. Both look very much alike and it is only the Bushmen who can distinguish them at a glance. Scotty told me that the bitter variety remains green longer than the sweet kind, and that great care has to be taken, when the tsamma ripens in August, to make certain that there are sufficient sweet melons left to yield a palatable drink,

"The tsamma is indispensable to the Kalahari Bushmen, and is his chief insurance against

dying of thirst. When the rains come at the proper time, that is during the December-February season, there is always a plentiful supply of tsamma later in the year. The Bushmen pick the melons and bury them in deep pits, dug in the sand, to keep them from ripening and rotting. In this way they ensure a good supply of the life-saving tsamma for use in time of droughts.

“During the two and a half months' trip our night cap always consisted of cocoa and tsamma juice. The whisky was handed over to the operators of two water boring machines, which started work in the Kalahari on the sites I selected along the course of the dry beds of the Anob and Nossob Rivers.

"After we had continued our journey from Areachap, Scotty and I usually jogged ahead of the wagon on our horses. Eventually we came to a stretch of the road where it took some sharp turns among some koppies. As we rounded one of these bends we suddenly came face to face with the police camel patrol on its way to

Upington from Rietfontein to deliver and collect the post.

Scotty immediately yelled, "Hang on!"

"Instinctively I dug my knees into the saddle as my horse reared up, turned completely round, and made off at full gallop. When I managed to pull him up I saw Scotty had guided his horse on to high ground well above the road, some distance from the camels. I also saw that the corporal in charge had dismounted and was walking to where Scotty was standing. When I joined them they both informed me that horses, unaccustomed to the strong scent peculiar to camels, always took fright when they first smelt it, but soon got used to it.

“Shortly afterwards the road led through a defile flanked by high walls of rock. Scotty pointed out that this had been the course of the Molopo River when it had been a perennial stream flowing into the Orange River, before climatic changes had produced desert conditions.

"After passing through the defile we followed the sandy bed of the Molopo on our way northwards. The first note-worthy sight which Scotty pointed out was a large deposit of garnets and similar stones associated with diamonds. He had spent much time sieving this deposit but had never discovered anything of value. He was convinced, however, that diamond pipes exist under the Kalahari sands, and from the geological point of view his surmise may well be correct.

"The next interesting feature he showed me was the remains of the house he had built when he had lived in the desert. It had been constructed on a large shelf of limestone overlooking the broad bed of sand forming the Molopo River at this point. Before he built the house Scotty had sunk a well through the thick layer of sand on to rock but had failed to strike water. A year or so afterwards the Kuruman River, which joins the Molopo, came down in flood and damned into a large lake at this point.

Such a thing had never been seen before in the memory of the oldest Bushman.

"Scotty had a theory, which I think is logical, that the Kalahari climate is gradually changing into wetter conditions. This is shown by the sand dunes having a covering of vegetation, which prevents them from moving.

"After leaving the site of Scotty's old residence our next outspan was at the junction of the Molopo and Kuruman Rivers, at a place called Witdraai. Late in the afternoon a wagon from Kuruman drew up some little distance from where we were camped. Scotty had a look at it and said to me, 'I believe that is an old friend of mine I haven't seen for twenty years.'

"He then strolled over to the wagon and shortly afterwards returned with the stranger, whose name was Howard. Scotty announced that he had invited him to dinner and suggested that, to celebrate the occasion, I might open a bottle of whisky. We all had a drink and Scotty and his friend started talking. It appeared that they had

been half-sections in the fighting which had taken place when some of the Transvaal burghers had decided to form the two new republics of Stellaland and Goshen.

“From what I gathered from the conversation between Scotty and his friend their headquarters had been with some of the local chiefs whose territory the burghers had annexed, along with a number of their cattle. Scotty and his pals, on the other hand, carried on armed raids against the burghers with the object of capturing as many cattle as possible, which they drove down to Kimberley and sold at lucrative prices.

“During dinner the conversation turned to a more recent incident in which Howard had been involved. Scotty opened the discussion by remarking, 'We are both getting old, Howard, but you are failing quicker than I am. That was a most disgraceful episode allowing yourself to be captured by the square-heads in their territory with a wagonload of rifles and ammunition for the Hereros.'

“Howard thumped the dining table and said, 'It certainly was disgraceful. I was camped in British territory, and had sent out a messenger to the Herero chief telling him where I was and the number of cattle I wanted in exchange for the rifles.'

“Howard also added that he was still quite capable of fixing his position accurately by using his sextant. Scotty then mentioned some landmarks in the area where the seizure had taken place. These were discussed in detail and Scotty asked me to bring my map. When I opened this he placed his finger on a spot in German territory and said, 'Howard, you were there.'

“The latter looked at the map and remarked, 'Yes, but that map's wrong. The proper boundary runs on that line of longitude right up to the Caprivi Strip.'

Scotty then told him that some years previously it had been agreed to move the boundary further east from a certain point as

shown on my chart. When he heard this Howard had to admit that he had been captured in German territory, and that he had therefore no hope of getting any compensation for the confiscated rifles and ammunition. After Howard had returned to his own camp Scotty informed me that when he first knew him he was their prize marksman with a Snider rifle.

“While we were encamped at Witdraai I visited the Cape police post to find out if there was a beacon on the border of German territory where the Auob River entered it. The police told me that they did not know, as the last habitation was on a surveyed farm at the junction of the Auob and Nossob Rivers. Scotty knew this spot and also the Afrikaner family who lived there. When we arrived at the place I was shown the approximate position, where the boundary of the farm crossed the bed of the Auob River. From this point I took prismatic compass readings at paced-out intervals along the dry bed and had the satisfaction of finding the beacon erected by the German Survey within half a mile of where my

rough calculations and measurements showed it should have been.

“The grazing and tsamma were plentiful, in the vicinity, and the game was abundant, so we decided to rest the oxen, do some shooting, and make a supply of biltong. On our second morning in this delightful neighbourhood Scotty suddenly saw two camel riders approaching. He immediately yelled to our ox-driver, 'Run and tell them to stop. On no account must they bring their camels within scent of our horses.'

"The driver did this and the riders dismounted some distance from where we were camped. One of them, a Cape police trooper, then came over to see us. He told us that the man with him had crossed the German border at Rietfontein in a hurry after dark, a few nights before. His sergeant, however, did not want him to be found there, in case the Germans came after him. He had therefore ordered him to take the fugitive to the Witdraai police post.

“ ‘I've also been instructed,’ he continued, ‘to find out where the water-boring plants are working to see if we can't get him a job with them.’ ”

“While the trooper was telling me this Scotty had been looking at the man, still standing beside the camels some distance away, through a pair of field glasses I used for spotting game. And when the policeman had finished speaking Scotty turned to him and said, 'What did he slip over the border for? Was it for pinching that pair of German army top boots he's wearing?'

“The trooper laughed and replied, ‘No. I think it's a case of I.D.B.’ ”

“Scotty thereupon remarked to me, ‘If he's got away with a good packet of stones belonging to the square-heads he deserves the most sympathetic consideration.’ ”

“We then told the policeman to bring the camels to our camp, as our horses had been sent away to graze in charge of our wagon driver. On

their arrival the fugitive handed me a note from one of the drill foremen.

“Before opening it I said to him, 'You've crossed over from German territory, I understand. Allow me to introduce you to Mr Smith. You and he no doubt will find much of mutual interest to talk about as he has travelled extensively where you come from, is acquainted with its inhabitants, and knows a lot about its diamonds.'

“Scotty gave a cough, and asked the fugitive a number of questions about various parts of the country where he said he had been prospecting. This embraced the area on the north bank of the Orange River from its mouth to Warmbad in German territory. When I listened to this conversation little did I realise that I should hear, about a year later (in September 1914) that the fugitive was acting as a scout for the Union troops in the very country he was now describing. The man, I may add, was given a job in charge of a steam pump supplying the drilling machines with water from the boreholes the drillers were sinking.

“On our return journey, we cut across from the Auob River through the dunes, on a track Scotty knew, to the Nossob River. While on this trip I shot a gemsbok bull in excellent condition. Scotty immediately got busy slicing off strips of meat for making into biltong. He also put aside a plentiful supply for the immediate use of ourselves and our boys. After he had finished, there was still a large quantity over.

“We’d just had our supper when a Bushman appeared and spoke to the wagon driver in a series of clicks. Scotty listened, and then turning to me remarked, 'He says he's hungry.'

“He instructed the driver to tell the Bushman to help himself from the pile of meat near the camp fire. The latter eagerly obeyed. He grabbed several large chunks, scraped out some hot embers, placed the meat on them for a few minutes, and then wolfed the lot, although it was still half raw. When he had finished Scotty said to the driver, 'Tell him to have some more if he wants to.'

“The Bushman then proceeded to polish off a second huge quantity of meat. Scotty turned to me and asked, 'Would you like to see him really fill his stomach?'

“I replied, 'It's pretty full now, isn't it?'

“Scotty answered, 'I think he can hold a bit more.'

“With that he told the driver to ask the Bushman if he would like some 'sadza'. This was a very stodgy mealie-meal porridge and there was a large three-legged pot of it standing on one side. The Bushman immediately gulped down a few pounds of the stuff. By this time his stomach was visibly distended.

“He then got up from where he had been squatting, wrapped the skin he used as a blanket round his shoulders, and curled up under a bush to sleep. When I remarked to Scotty that he had apparently swallowed this huge meal without chewing it, he laughed.

“ ‘In order to survive,’ he explained, ‘these primitive people have to take in enormous

quantities of food at one sitting, and then slowly digest it over a period of time. When they hit a buck with a poisoned arrow it often runs for miles before it dies. This means that the hunter and his family frequently have to follow the track of a wounded animal for long distances before they can eat it. When game is plentiful the women, in particular, collect reserves of food on their buttocks. From this they can draw nourishment in times of scarcity.'

"The following morning at sunrise the Bushman came and thanked us for the hearty meal he had eaten the night before. When asked if he wanted breakfast he said 'No,' but he would like to take some meat with him. Scotty then told the driver to ask him where he had come from. He pointed to the north in the direction we were going. He said tsamma was very scarce and there was no game a short distance ahead of our camp.

"Scotty was very keen on reaching an area known as Seven Pans. A few years before a Bushman had shown him some garnets which he said he had found there. Unfortunately, owing to

lack of tsamma, we were unable to travel to this place.

"We resumed our journey, and came to a stretch of country where the melons ceased to be plentiful. We decided to leave the wagon there and to continue on horseback to Kromdraai on the Nossob River. But when we got there we found, as the Bushman had warned us, that the tsamma was practically non-existent."

Major Anderson goes on to relate an incident which shows that even Scotty Smith with his wide and comprehensive knowledge of the desert was not infallible and could sometimes make a mistake.

"On the outward journey I had noticed a dead tree, smothered under a large bird nest composed of piles of dry grass, standing on the top of a high sand dune. It was some distance on our left and I had mentally recorded the fact that it made an excellent landmark. Instead of riding back to the wagon the way we had come, Scotty suggested taking a detour

through the dunes to make certain that there was no more tsamma. Our search, however, proved fruitless and after some time we decided to give it up and return to the wagon.

"Scotty took the lead, but my horse kept pulling to the left, and I had a premonition that we were bearing too much to the right. I mentioned this to Scotty but he was certain that he was on the direct line. As we topped a high ridge of dunes near sunset I noticed the tree I'd seen in the morning. It was some distance away, and to the left of the route we were taking. Scotty was ahead of me and so I shouted and pointed to my landmark. He looked round, saw the tree, and immediately admitted his mistake. 'You're right,' he called back; 'we're off the line.'

"The sun was setting by this time and it would obviously be dark before we reached the wagon. Fortunately my horse could instinctively find his way home in the dark to the place where he knew he would be fed. We therefore left it to him and he took us safely

back to camp. During supper I remarked, 'I wonder if that Bushman is still travelling on the feed we gave him.'

" 'Most probably,' Scotty answered, 'and he may be sixty or seventy miles from here. It is really incredible the long distances they and their families can traverse without becoming unduly fatigued.'

"Scotty also told me about some of his hunting experiences and in this way gave me a good insight into the lore of the veld, which he had acquired. 'When for example,' he explained, 'a herd of gemsbok are grazing, a bull always remains down wind as a sentry. He invariably takes up his stance on a high sand dune from which he can observe the neighbouring countryside and although he is as big as a mule his colour blends so well with the dune grass that he is practically invisible. In fact the only way you can see him is when he moves his head and the light glints off his long horns. But if you can manage to pass him unobserved, it's possible to get quite close to

the grazing herd. They rely so much on their guardian that they are quite unsuspecting of any danger.'

"On one occasion Scotty and a Bushman were out hunting. They passed the sentinel bull safely and were on the point of crawling to the top of a ridge, from which vantage point they expected to be able to see the herd grazing below them when suddenly the Bushman noticed a newly born gemsbok calf. He picked it up in his arms and it let out a shrill bleat. The next moment an enraged gemsbok cow had charged over the top of the dune. The Bushman saw her coming and he wasted no time. Dropping the calf he disappeared rapidly down wind.

"The furious mother stopped, smelt her baby and then, catching Scotty's scent, she whirled round, lowered her horns and made a bee-line for him. Instinctively he jerked up his gun and fired. His luck was in. The heavy Martini bullet caught the charging animal on the forehead and she dropped dead in her

tracks, the points of her long, sharp horns striking the ground within a couple of feet of where he was lying.

" 'Whew!' Scotty remarked. 'that was one of my narrowest squeaks.'

"The old outlaw also had a very healthy respect for leopards, and warned me never to shoot at one, unless I was absolutely certain of killing it. 'A leopard,' he pointed out, 'always charges if it's wounded, and it does so by swerving like lightning from side to side through the grass. It is therefore almost impossible to get in a second shot before the animal is on you. I myself,' he concluded, 'only take a chance with one if I have a good pack of hunting dogs with me.'

"After Scotty and I had returned to Upington we arranged to visit the area around Seven Pans the following year. Even if tamma were unobtainable, we believed that we could subsist on water from one of the boreholes which I had planned. However, it was not to be. The next

year I was actually on my way to meet Scotty, in fulfilment of my promise, when on 4th August Great Britain declared war on Germany. Instead of arriving at Upington, I found myself part of the force which landed at Port Nolloth under the command of Brigadier General Tim Lukin. Alas! Scotty and I were fated never to meet again."

Another gentleman who spent some time with Scotty Smith in the Kalahari and became a firm friend of his was Mr R. W. Thornton. Mr Thornton is now living in retirement at Bathurst in the Eastern Cape, but when he first met Scotty he was the Principal of the Grootfontein Agricultural College. A few years before, he had come into prominence as the leader of the famous South-African expedition to the French Sahara in search of a particular breed of ostriches,⁴ and subsequently he was to become Agricultural Adviser to the High Commissioner for Basutoland, Swaziland and British Bechuana-land.

In 1914 Mr Thornton was eager to join the Union forces in the First World War. General Botha, however, who valued his services highly, had an important commission for him to perform before he would agree to his release from his post at Grootfontein.

The Government was engaged at the time on a very interesting experiment. In South West Africa there was a certain type of sheep with silky hair, known as the Gladdehaar Afrikander. It was hoped that by crossing this with the ordinary black Karakul, it would be possible to evolve a high-class grey and white astrakhan fur.

Mr Thornton was put in charge of the experiment and one of his first tasks was to proceed to South West Africa and collect some of the Gladdehaar sheep. These were then to be transported to Grootfontein where the mating would take place. He accordingly set out for Upington, the jumping-off place for the expedition. Soon after he arrived there he went to see the magistrate in order to obtain a guide to the Kalahari. Those were, however, very free and

⁴ See *Assegai over the Hills* by the author

easy days in the civil service and although it was past nine in the morning when he reached the office, he found that the magistrate had not arrived. He waited for some time and then the clerk in charge said, "The chief should be here by eleven. Come back then."

A couple of hours later the magistrate had still not put in an appearance, and his deputy evidently felt that it was impossible to shield him any longer. He therefore asked Thornton what his business was and when he found out he proved most cooperative.

"Look," he remarked, "I wouldn't bother about the chief, if I were you. He's dead drunk and not likely to be back at work for a day or two. In any case if you're wanting a guide there's only one man for you, that's Scotty Smith."

Thornton, who had already heard a great deal about the one-time outlaw, but had never met him, was very keen to make his acquaintance.

"Do you know whether he's available?" he asked the clerk.

"I should think so," the man replied. "I believe he's been out in the desert with some prospectors, but I heard he'd got back this morning."

"Where can I find him?" Thornton enquired.

"He'll probably be at home with his family. You'd better go there and see him."

Thornton went to Scotty's cottage and was invited inside. He introduced himself, outlined his plans, and asked the outlaw whether he would act as his guide. All the time he was talking Scotty listened intently to what he was saying but never uttered a single word himself. Suddenly he turned to his wife.

"Give me my overcoat and a bottle of brandy," he told her. "I'm going on a trip."

In those few minutes he had sized Thornton up, had approved of him, had come to his decision, and had disposed of his luggage problems. As the latter subsequently discovered, Scotty had taken an instant liking to him, a liking which was to prove mutual.

Thornton had an old Standard car available for the journey and he was more fortunate than Major Anderson had been in getting off to an early start. Probably, as far as Scotty was concerned, it was the difference between a bottle of brandy and a whole case.

The roads were very bad and on the first day they made only slow progress. That night they stopped at Swartmodder, Witbooi's former capital. There they were hospitably entertained by a farmer named Steyn who put Thornton up for the night. Scotty, however, preferred to sleep on the ground next to the car.

While Thornton was talking to his host an interesting thing happened. One of the farm boys arrived and informed his master that two of the donkeys had died of lamsiekte.

"Have you burnt the bodies?" Steyn asked. "Ja, Baas," was the reply.

Thornton pricked up his ears because, although he was an expert on animal husbandry, he had never heard of this method of preventing

the disease from spreading. He sent the information to Sir Arnold Theiler, the Director of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Laboratories, and this procedure subsequently became the common practice in controlling lamsiekte in South-Africa.

After supper Thornton thought he had better go down to see how his guide was getting on. He found the brandy bottle nearly empty and Scotty dead to the world. Taking the car cushions and a blanket, he tried to make him comfortable for the night. But the latter was annoyed at being disturbed.

"Leave me alone," he moaned. "Leave me alone." In spite of his protests, however, Thornton managed to tuck him in and then returned to the house. It was certainly not a very promising start to the expedition, but just as had happened in Major Anderson's case any fears which he may have entertained for the success of the undertaking were soon dispelled.

Early on the following morning Thornton took a cup of strong black coffee down to the

car. He found Scotty dressed and quite sober, but feeling very sorry for himself. They started off and the first part of the trip was anything but a pleasant one. Scotty was sullen and morose and for some hours he never said a word. All of a sudden he stooped down and picked up the bottle of brandy. He looked at it for a moment. There were still a few tots left. Then he hurled it violently out of the car. It went skidding across the veld.

"I'll not have another drink until this trip's over, Mr Thornton," he remarked earnestly. "I promise you that." And he kept his word.

On the whole the journey was a rough one and very trying to anyone not accustomed to desert travelling but it did not seem to affect Scotty in any way. Their route took them up the dry bed of the Molopo River and here the going was not too strenuous at first because it had rained before they had left Upington. As the sand dried out, however, it became more and more difficult to make any headway. When the wind blew, large sand dunes would form in the river

bed and this seriously impeded their progress. Often, too, the car would get stuck and in spite of their united efforts they would be unable to shift it. Then Scotty would go off on his own into the desert to seek help. Invariably, within a short time he would return with some Basters or Hottentots and a few donkeys and with their aid they would start moving again.

Thornton found that Scotty was not only an excellent guide but that he knew exactly where to locate the animals for which he was looking. As a result they managed to round up about one hundred and fifty sheep. These were driven back to Upington. On the return trip Thornton became very ill and Scotty looked after him with a care and gentleness which one would hardly have expected to find in such a tough character. For some days they were forced to stop, but as soon as the patient had sufficiently recovered they resumed their journey to Upington. The whole expedition had taken only fourteen days and owing to Scotty's invaluable assistance it had been eminently successful. One thing, however,

was troubling Thornton and that was how he was going to transport the sheep to Grootfontein. Scotty reassured him on this point.

"Don't worry," he remarked. "Just leave everything to me." He was as good as his word and within a short time the sheep were safely delivered to the college.

Before returning home, Thornton went to Scotty's house to say goodbye to him and to reward him for his services.

"How much do I owe you?" he asked.

To his amazement Scotty replied, "There's nothing to pay."

"Look," Thornton remonstrated, "I'm not footing the bill for this trip. The Government's responsible for all expenses."

Scotty was, however, in one of his stubborn moods. "I said," he repeated, "there's nothing to pay."

"But that's absurd," Thornton pointed out. "I've had two weeks of your time. I must give

you something." "Look here, young fellow," Scotty repeated. "I said there's nothing to pay and there is nothing to pay. Let's go and have a drink."

No argument or persuasion would make him change his mind. The fact was that the two fellow travellers had become great friends and if Scotty took a fancy to anyone he would do anything in the world for him.

After Thornton's return to Grootfontein their friendship did not lapse. They kept up a regular correspondence, and Scotty often proved of great assistance to Thornton in certain types of research work on which he was engaged. At one time, for example, he was experimenting with drought-resistant grasses and Scotty sent him various kinds of seed, which he had collected in the Kalahari. An interesting discovery which he made in this connection was that if he sowed these in well-prepared seed beds they came to nothing. When, however, he planted them in the earth heaps dug up by ant bears on the veld they germinated and grew well.

Mr Thornton assured me that he intended persuading Scotty to write his reminiscences when the war was over. But Fate decreed otherwise, and they never met again. Shortly after his return from overseas he received the sad news that his friend had died and had been buried in Upington. During their close association together, however, Scotty had told him a good deal about his early life and experiences. Much of this information is incorporated in this book.

Unfortunately so many of Scotty Smith's exploits and escapades have not been recorded and have now been irretrievably lost that it is a great pity that he never wrote his autobiography, especially as there is evidence that he fully intended doing so. And it is a queer commentary on historical cause and effect that perhaps the chief reason which deterred him was his antagonism towards Cecil John Rhodes.

It will be remembered that, not long before the overthrow of the Stellaland Goshen Republics, Scotty had been arrested on a charge

of murder and had been thrown into jail. He blamed Rhodes for having instigated his arrest and he never forgave him for the insult to his pride. This was not, of course, the only time that Scotty had been imprisoned but he always bore these indignities with equanimity. Yet the one occasion on which he was unjustly apprehended rankled with him for the rest of his life.

Not that he ever gave this as the real reason for his hatred of Cecil Rhodes. On the contrary, he would wax indignant over the rape of the diamond fields and the unjust way in which the Free State had been treated by Great Britain. In spite of his undoubted loyalty, he believed that the little Boer Republic had been swindled and that the subsequent offer of the miserly sum of £90,000 as compensation, "in order to soothe bitter recollections," had merely added insult to injury. The diamond magnate, of course, had had nothing to do with all this, but Scotty could not forget that he had been the chief beneficiary of the annexation.

"Although," he would remark to his friends," Rhodes had great talents, he was quite unprincipled. No one who believes that the end justifies the means can be a really great man. Now David Livingstone," and his eyes would light up, "Ah! There was someone whom you could really admire and respect, because he always practised what he preached."

During his retirement many people approached Scotty with offers for permission to publish his reminiscences. He always refused. And although others did their best to induce "this priceless old relic of the past", as Col. B. C. Judd once described him, to write his autobiography, his antagonism to Rhodes proved the chief stumbling block. That this was so is also evident from the following letter which he wrote to his friend, George Beet, with whom he had kept up a sporadic correspondence ever since they had first met in the wild Stellaland-Goshen days of the early eighteenthies.

In 1914 Beet, who wanted to compile an article about the outlaw, asked him whether he could publish his photograph. Scotty's reply is illuminating.

"Dear Sir," he wrote, "You have my permission to use my photograph and to use your own discretion as to what name you put under it. As far as reminiscences go, I made a start and gave the Rev. John Mackenzie the credit of stopping the Boers from going west (not Rhodes) and had the Boers gone west at that time they would have formed a union with the Germans, and this Colony would only have extended as far as Griqualand West if it existed at all. I also gave the Bros Fenton the credit for De Beers. A storm was raised and I gave it up. As I saw I was bound to touch someone on the raw.

Yours faithfully,
Geo St Leger Lennox
Scotty Smith."

Born 22 November 1845

not out

Subsequently Scotty elaborated on this point to Thornton. He told him that he had actually sent the manuscript of his life story to Sir James Rose-Innes, afterwards Chief Justice of the Union. Unfortunately it contained some rather scathing remarks about Rhodes and the publishers asked Scotty to delete or modify these. He refused to do this and, as neither side would give way, the book was returned to him and he threw it in the fire.

Scotty's widow also confirmed that he had written an autobiography. After his death she proved just as allergic to journalists and writers as her husband had been. Many attempts were made to interview her, but although she was very loyal to Scotty's memory and extremely proud of him, she invariably refused to discuss his career. She did, however, state that he had originally written the story of his life for the sake of his children. He had intended having

this published in Holland posthumously, but had subsequently changed his mind and had destroyed the MS.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE LAST CAMPAIGN

During the 1914 - 1918 War, Scotty was one of the first to offer his services to the Union authorities, and he was given a job after his own heart. He was attached to the staff of Military Intelligence with the rank of Warrant Officer. He was allowed a fairly free hand and was not expected to conform to the ordinary regulations. This suited him admirably. Dressed in his serviceable desert uniform, an ancient pair of khaki slacks, a khaki shirt, and a slouch hat, he wandered about spying on the rebels and reporting; their movements and activities to headquarters.

In spite of his age the old veteran was remarkably fit. Although his red beard had turned white, his back was as stiff as a ramrod and he was still nimble and active.

Notwithstanding, the hard, rough life he had led, his powers of endurance were unimpaired and he was able to ride for hours at a stretch across the sandy desert wastes without exhibiting undue signs of exhaustion or fatigue.

Soon after war had been declared, some of the Boer leaders thought that their chance had at last come to overthrow British rule in South-Africa, and so they broke into open rebellion. Among them were the Commandant-General, Christian Beyers, and the famous guerrilla fighter, General Christian de Wet.

In South West Africa the Germans had concentrated powerful bodies of men at Nakop and Ramans Drift, while across the border at Upington and Kakamas large detachments of the Union Defence Force under the command of another Anglo-Boer War hero, General Manie Maritz, had been assembled. In October, 1914, there was a sensational development. General Maritz suddenly deserted to the enemy, taking with him a

considerable of his men. This might have proved a very serious matter, but fortunately for the Union the rebels received very little support from their fellow countrymen. The rising had, however, to be suppressed before Botha could put into operation his plan to invade South West Africa.

During this period of his military service, Scotty had his full share of adventures. One day, for example, he was out scouting, near a small village which he knew to be occupied by the rebels when he saw a train of wagons in the distance. He rode up to investigate. As he drew nearer he noticed to his surprise that there were no Boers in the immediate vicinity and that, although the wagons were loaded with captured ammunition and guns, for some unknown reason they were unguarded and unescorted. Making certain that it was not a trap Scotty approached and peremptorily ordered the African drivers in charge of the convoy to change direction. Then at gun point

he forced them to take their wagons to the nearest British encampment.

When he reached the camp the old man was feeling very proud of his single-handed achievement. Dismounting, he told the sergeant on guard outside the commandant's tent that he wanted to see that officer immediately.

The dapper, smartly dressed non-commissioned officer stared at the dilapidated-looking old man in his desert-soiled uniform and then rather contemptuously remarked, "The colonel's busy and. won't be able to see you. What d'ye want?"

"Young man," Scotty growled, "you'd better do as I tell you at once or it'll be the worse for you."

There was something so menacing in his tone that in spite of himself the sergeant was compelled to obey.

"Wait here," he grumbled, as he reluctantly entered the tent. He returned a minute later with the message that Scotty was to remain outside

until the commandant was ready to see him. This was too much for the old veteran. Pushing the sergeant roughly aside he walked into the tent and faced the irate officer.

"Who the devil told you to come in here? Didn't I give orders that . . .," the latter shouted.

But Scotty cut him short. "Look, sir," he said. "I've no time to waste. My business's important. I've captured a convoy of rebel wagons and guns and I want a receipt for them."

The colonel went red in the face. "How dare you interrupt me with a cock-and-bull story like that? Don't you know who I am? I'm Colonel"

"And I," said Scotty impressively, "I'm Scotty Smith."

The change in the atmosphere was remarkable. The commandant had heard a good deal about Scotty's exploits. He knew that he was very favourably regarded by some of the highest-ranking officers in the Union forces. He immediately altered his tone. And then, after examining the wagons and congratulating Scotty

on his outstanding achievement in capturing them, he gave him the necessary receipt without further delay.

On another of his reconnoitring trips, Scotty's half-section happened to be a young soldier who was little more than five feet in height. Probably to compensate himself for his lack of inches, Shorty, as he was nicknamed, sported a huge pair of whiskers. In addition he had all the courage in the world and was a deadly shot. Scotty, while greatly admiring his companion's good qualities, could not help being amused at his strange appearance.

One day they were out on patrol when they saw a band of rebels which greatly outnumbered them. At the same moment the enemy caught sight of them and began firing. Scotty and Shorty immediately dived behind some boulders which effectively sheltered them from the fusillade of bullets which the enemy let loose.

Their position was, however, hopeless. It was just a matter of time before they would be

outflanked and captured or killed. In the nick of time a small detachment of the Eighth Mounted Rifles attracted by the shooting, arrived on the scene. The enemy fled and their lives were saved.

Staff Sergeant George Wilson, who is now living in retirement at Roodepoort, was with the relieving force. He told me that he looked at the queerly assorted pair, whom he had helped to rescue. Then he asked Scotty: "How many shots did you fire?"

"I didn't fire at all," Scotty replied with a grin, "I was far too busy looking after Scotty Smith, and seeing that no harm came to him, but my friend Shorty here he fired five shots, I believe, and it certainly looks as though he hit something."

He pointed to where the rebels had been, and where some dark objects were now lying on the ground. They went down to investigate and found five bodies, a remarkable tribute to Shorty's accurate marksmanship.

The fact that Scotty did not allow his sense of patriotism, and there was never any doubt of his fervent loyalty to the British cause, to clash with the opportunity of obtaining something for nothing from the military authorities is well illustrated by the following two anecdotes, both of which were related to me by George Wilson.

"I was orderly room sergeant for the Eighth Mounted Rifles," he told me, "and on one occasion we were camped on a hill outside Upington. From my bedroom-office, a tent overlooking Scotty Smith's house, I could see he had a large lucerne patch attached to it. I noticed that there were always a few animals feeding there, but couldn't understand why they kept on changing.

"One day there would be a couple of oxen in the field, the next day it would be a pair of horses, the following week half a dozen donkeys or mules and so on. This puzzled me. At the time, however, I had not yet met the redoubtable Scotty. Later on he paid me a visit and we became acquainted. I then ventured to ask him

about the animals. I can recall the quizzical look he gave me.

"Well, sergeant,' he remarked with a broad grin, 'if the Government is incapable of looking after its own property here's one man who can do the job for it.' And I know for certain," Mr Wilson continued, "that Scotty made a regular practice of gathering in the spoils of war whenever he had the chance. During our advance into South West Africa he was attached to the Eighth Mounted Rifles. When we were routed by the rebels under General Manie Maritz at Lutzputs he was particularly active. In the state of confusion which prevailed during our withdrawal he seized his opportunity and drove off hundreds of animals belonging to both sides.

"When I subsequently spoke to him about it he was quite unrepentant.

"My boy," he exclaimed gleefully, 'a man only gets a chance like that once in a lifetime-and I took it.'" During the campaign Scotty

continued to serve with Military Intelligence. He was given the very type of assignment which he himself would have chosen. This was to keep a watchful eye on the Germans along the Orange River border. He was now, of course, working on his own ground. He also had valuable allies in the Hottentots and Bushmen, who acted as his spies and kept him fully cognisant of any German troop movements in the area. Scotty did his work well and he collected a great deal of valuable military information.

One day some of his Hottentot followers came to him and suggested that they would be much more effective if they were mounted. Scotty thought so too, and he decided to take their request to Intelligence headquarters, which were then situated in the magistrate's house at Uington. At the same time he made up his mind that he could not let such a golden opportunity slip of doing some business on his own. His suggestion about mounting the Hottentots was favourably received by the

authorities and it also appeared quite natural that his offer to provide the necessary horses should also be accepted.

"I know just where we can get the animals we require," he explained. "And at a reasonable price too - £30 each."

Scotty set out and some time later he arrived back with twenty fine horses which he drove into the kraal behind the magistrate's house. While he was doing this the men stood about admiring them.

"What magnificent beasts," one of them remarked. Scotty, however, did not consider it necessary to inform his comrades-in-arms that he had drawn a special commission of £100 from the farmer for buying the animals from him. Nor for that matter did he mention the fact that for another £50 he had dropped a hint that the kraal gate might be carelessly left open so that the animals could return home, which is exactly what did happen. Just before dawn someone slipped out and released the catch. Shortly

afterwards one of the soldiers, passing the kraal, let out a startled yell. The men rushed out and found the gate wide open and the horses gone. Some of them were upset but Scotty was not perturbed.

"Don't worry," he consoled them. "They can't have got very far, we'll soon have them back."

A mounted party led by Scotty followed the tracks. A few miles away they came upon the runaway steeds making steadily for home. Scotty had kept his word to the farmer all right. He had set the horses free. But he had quite forgotten to point out that they might be recaptured before they reached the farm!

Scotty really knew the desert like the back of his hand and this proved most useful during the advance of General Botha's forces into South West Africa. George Wilson gave me a striking example of how accurate and precise Scotty's knowledge really was. One afternoon the colonel of the Eighth Mounted Rifles summoned him

and, showing him a map, pointed to a tree marked on it.

"Do you know that tree?" he asked. "Yes, sir," Scotty replied.

"Well," the Colonel continued, "I want to reach that point at seven tonight. What time must we leave here?" Scotty thought for a moment. "We'd better make it about five, sir," he suggested. They did this and at seven o'clock that evening they were under the tree.

Scattered throughout South-Africa there are still a number of men who have cause to thank Fate for Scotty's intimate acquaintance with desert life and conditions. One of these is Francois Greeff of Observatory in the Cape.

Today Mr Greeff is a businessman and garage owner. As a young man, however, he led a most adventurous life which took him to all parts of the African continent. Francois Greeff knew Scotty well and it is to him that I am indebted for this interesting account of how the old outlaw's comprehensive knowledge of the desert and of

the art of survival in the sandy wastes once saved the lives of a number of South-African soldiers during the first World War. In 1914 Mr Greeff was living at Jansenville. Although only fifteen years old at the time when the rebellion broke out, he immediately joined up with the Twentieth Mounted Rifles (afterwards known as Breytenbach's Light Horse). Subsequently, as a member of this well-known regiment, he took part in the invasion of South West Africa under General Botha, and this led directly to his first meeting with Scotty Smith.

The campaign took place in the middle of summer and as the men of the Mounted Rifles rode across the desert sands the sun beat mercilessly down on them. Soon they were suffering intensely from the heat and before long the water carts had been emptied. To make matters worse the commissariat department had broken down and there seemed to be no immediate prospect of obtaining fresh supplies.

The position grew more and more critical. In order to spare their horses many of the riders

dismounted and led them. Fortunately, however, they knew that they were near Lutzputs where there were wells of drinking water and this was the only thing that kept them going.

Pushing on with all speed they reached the wells at last, only to find to their horror that one had dried up and that the other had been polluted by the enemy before retiring. Subsequently they discovered that a few days before, a fight had taken place there between the rebels and the Eighth Mounted Rifles, in which the latter had been defeated. After they had retreated, the enemy had collected the bodies of some of the men killed in the battle and had thrown them into the well before themselves withdrawing.

By this time many of the advancing soldiers were in a state of collapse and a number of the horses were in an even worse plight. But although their throats were parched, the stench from the wells was so terrible that the animals refused to drink. Then one of the troopers had a brainwave. He smeared axle-grease up same of the horses' nostrils and in this way the

animals were able to drink a little water and so gain some relief. This was at best a desperate remedy and quite a few of the poor beasts actually died of thirst. As for the majority of the men, one look at the stagnant, putrid mess in the well, with pieces of bloated flesh floating about in it, was enough to make them violently sick. A few of the tougher or more desperate soldiers, however, overcoming their qualms, sieved the nauseous liquid and adding Condyl's crystals managed in this way to swallow some of it before their stomachs revolted.

At this stage the officer in charge began sending out heliograph messages appealing urgently for help.

"It was lucky for us," Francois Greeff told me, "that Scotty Smith happened to be in the vicinity and that he was able to come to our assistance. He arrived about midnight, and we were at once told to fall in. With Scotty at our head and leading our horses, which were by this time much too weak to ride, we set out.

Staggering and stumbling across the desert we made slow progress. Fortunately we hadn't very far to go. Scotty led us straight to the dry bed of the Molopo River. Then he quickly chose a spot and told us to dig.

"We had no trench tools and so we sank to our knees and began excavating a fairly large hole with our hands. The men formed a line and the sand stuffed in nose-bags was passed along this to the surface. Luckily for us the ground was soft. Before long we had gone down more than a dozen feet. Suddenly one of the men let out a hoarse yell. In a parched, croaking voice he shouted, 'Water, boys! Water.'

"There, seeping through the smooth, round, river stones was a thin trickle of clear, fresh water. Before beginning to dig, the soldiers had been given instructions to short-halter their horses and extra men had been detailed to guard them. It was a good thing that this precaution had been taken, because as soon as the animals smelt the life-saving liquid they nearly went mad with

excitement. They would undoubtedly have stampeded."

Then, true to the highest traditions of a crack Imperial cavalry regiment, these irregular volunteer Union troops looked after the needs of their horses first before relieving their own thirst. Each horse was given a quarter of a nosebag of water to drink. Only after this had been done did the men attend to their own urgent requirements.

Scotty Smith had a complex nature and certainly one that was very different from that of most other people. Although he frequently talked about his many misdeeds, he never once mentioned the most distinguished performance of his whole military career. This was an episode for which he would have received the greatest public credit had it been publicised; yet he was strangely secretive about it. If it had not been for the fact that another man was with him when it happened, the whole affair would have remained unknown. The other man was Clement Handley and the story is the strange one of how Scotty actually saved the Union's first Prime Minister,

General Louis Botha, from ignominious capture or possible death at the hands of the Germans.

The event took place during the advance of the Union forces into South West Africa. Some miles ahead of the main marching column and spread out on either side of it were a number of specially chosen men, whose duty it was to keep a watch for German troops and prevent them from making a surprise attack. Two of the best and most experienced of these scouts were Clement Handley and Scotty Smith.

Scotty, through his friendship with the Bushmen and Hottentots, had developed a very fine intelligence service of his own. Little that happened in the desert escaped the notice of these wandering nomads and they kept Scotty well informed of any German manoeuvres which came to their notice.

As the South-African force advanced slowly through the desert towards Windhoek, General Botha developed the dangerous habit of riding far ahead of his troops. Accompanied only by a

handful of officers and quite unprotected, he would often put some miles between himself and the main body of his soldiers. This rash action gave his staff many anxious moments, but they could not induce him to adopt more satisfactory security measures. All they could do was to instruct the scouts to take extra precautions to ensure his safety.

For a time all went well. Then one day a Hottentot runner came post-haste into the camp with disquieting news. He reported to Scotty that German spies had informed the German High Command of Botha's foolhardy practice and that a lightning raid was being planned to capture him.

After this Scotty decided to make Louis Botha's safety his own particular care. He therefore dropped all other assignments and concentrated on keeping a vigilant eye on the General. With this aim in view he formed an unseen but special bodyguard to protect General Botha. This bodyguard consisted of himself, Handley and eight selected Hottentot soldiers.

Day after day these ten men threw an invisible, protective screen round their charge. It was a difficult task as Botha had to be kept in complete ignorance of their presence. They remained just out of his sight and yet close enough to maintain a constant watch.

For weeks nothing happened and it looked as though the Germans had revised their plans. In fact it was not until the column was nearing Windhoek that the expected development took place and Scotty's vigilance was rewarded. Towards sunset one afternoon General Botha and his advance party were, as usual, a few miles ahead of the main body of troops. They decided to halt and wait for their men to catch up. They dismounted and sat down on the sand to rest.

Scotty was idly watching them when suddenly out of the corner of his eye something attracted his attention. Immediately he swung round and, gripping Handley by the arm, he pointed. In the far distance a line of small dots had appeared. Scotty instantly recognised them as horsemen riding in an encircling movement to

enfilade the General and his staff. It was obvious that they had chosen their approach carefully. They were coming from the west so that their victims would have the sun in their eyes and would not easily see them.

Prompt action had to be taken if disaster were to be averted. Botha and his men were too far away to warn, and their fate now lay in Scotty's hands.

"Unless we do something, and do it pretty damn quickly," he muttered, "they'll take him by surprise." He barked a command and his men instantly obeyed. Silently and swiftly he led them round in a wide sweep towards the strategic point he had chosen, in the path of the advancing German force. When they reached it they hid their horses behind a small hillock and left them in charge of one of the Hottentots. Dropping to the ground and spreading out, they climbed a sand dune, still unobserved by the enemy. Then Scotty snapped another order. "When I give the signal," he commanded, "let them have it."

Tensed up, with their guns ready, they waited. Suddenly, not a hundred yards away, the head of the German column appeared.

"Fire," Scotty yelled. Nine shots rang out simultaneously. Then his men continued shooting as quickly as they could reload and pull the trigger. A dozen Germans were shot from their saddles. The rest, thinking that they were being attacked by the advance guard and that the remainder of the force was close behind, turned and fled. The General and his staff heard the firing but they never knew how close they had come to being captured that evening. Not many men would have remained quiet after performing such a signal service to the Union's war effort. Nor did the Prime Minister ever know that the old free booter, cattle lifter and horse thief had saved him from being taken prisoner in this dramatic way. In fact, if Handley had not, fortunately for posterity, placed on record his own account of this incident, it would have remained just another

lost story in the life history of South-Africa's most remarkable outlaw.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE END OF THE TRAIL

The Year 1919 Was A Black One for Scotty's admirers throughout South-Africa. In that year the old veteran contracted 'flu and at last reached the end of the trail. But even in death Scotty outwitted his enemies, many of whom had confidently predicted that he would die with his boots on. Instead he passed away peacefully in bed.

During his last illness Scotty had no idea that his days were numbered. "When I saw him," Mrs Schutz, who visited him frequently at this time, informed me, "he thought he would be up and about in a couple of days. He did not look so very ill to me at all, but it must have been his age ... I'll never forget him lying on the bed. He was fully dressed and was reclining on a torn mattress, covered with blankets. Everything, however, was spotlessly clean.

"I had no idea he was dying: He refused to give in and remained cheerful and bright. Every now and then a faint smile would cross his lips as he reflected on the full life which he had led. Gradually, however, he grew weaker and weaker and at last I could see that he was a desperately sick man. But he still kept his spirits up, although just before the end he must've realised that his time had come, because he sent a Bushman to call his friend, the priest, to bid him farewell. He was, however, denied this final solace and comfort and I was the unwitting cause of it.

"I kept a couple of dachshunds at the mission station. The boy was afraid of them and so failed to call Father until it was too late. When he at last received the message he hurried to the bedside of his friend. But by then it was all over and Scotty was no longer in need of human sympathy or comfort."

It was appropriate that, like so much of his own life, the day Scotty died was an extremely stormy one. The thunder crashed, the lightning

struck and the heavens were illuminated. Perhaps nature could have paid no finer tribute to the finale of the old outlaw's long and tempestuous career.

Scotty Smith was buried in the Upington cemetery and a simple metal plaque was erected over his grave. It read: "George St Leger Gordon Lennox. Gone but not forgotten. Never will his memory fade. Wife and children." This plain inscription has proved strangely prophetic. Whatever position Scotty is ultimately destined to occupy in the history of South-Africa, one thing is certain; although more than a century has passed since his birth, his memory has not faded, The faces of old-timers who knew him personally still light up when his name is mentioned and they recall his many and varied exploits.

The truth is that, like most of us, Scotty's nature was a mixture of good and evil. In his case both these elements appeared in a greatly exaggerated form. In one of his letters to me, Major Anderson sums him up especially well.

"I would like to stress," he wrote, "that Scotty was a well-educated man, with a clear brain, a magnificent stamina (he was nearly seventy years old when we went on our trip together), and a keen sense of sarcastic humour. He certainly was not a criminal in the usual meaning of the term, although he broke the law on numerous occasions. If he had remained in the Army, and his regiment had been engaged on continual active service, George St Leger Gordon Lennox would undoubtedly have made an honoured name for himself.

"That Scotty fully appreciated his own position was made clear to me one night when we were sitting at the camp fire sipping our cocoa before turning into our blankets, which were already spread out on the soft, desert sands.

"‘My only trouble," he told me, "has been that I was born two hundred years too late.’

"How do you make that out?" I asked.

He then said, ‘My great weakness is, if I see a bunch of good cattle I want to annex them. In

modern times this is looked upon as stealing and calls for police intervention, which may lead to imprisonment without the option of a fine.'

"To this I replied, 'Quite so.'

"He then continued, 'Two hundred years ago annexing other people's cattle was known as rieving. A successful riever was a highly honoured member of his family group, and if the cattle had been rieved from south of the Scottish border the riever was acclaimed as a Scottish hero. You see my point.'

"I assured him that I fully appreciated his argument." Mr George Beet, who knew Scotty for a longer period than most people, also once discussed this subject. In an article on the famous outlaw, which appeared in the Cape Argus of 11th September 1926, he wrote:

"To my mind, Scotty was a bit of an anachronism, a reversion to type. He came of good old Scottish Border stock, and no doubt the more primitive instincts were derived from his hard-living, hard-fighting, cattle-lifting ances-

tors, and had inevitably to gravitate to the surface, whatsoever the consequences.

"The love of adventure and freedom was dominant in him, and he felt compelled to obey and observe the primal law and custom of the wilderness in which, to him and his kind, the restraints of civilisation are ever irksome and occasionally impossible. He was no better and no worse than many another and more illustrious and successful adventurer in our colonial history; one who had to rely on his wits to make a virtue of necessity in those great wastelands of Empire where nine-tenths of the conventions of law and order were apt to be openly resented and as openly flouted. 'Scotty' lived as he pleased to live and died a free man."

Actually the enigma of Scotty Smith, of his dual personality and his Jekyll-and-Hyde existence, is no enigma at all. It is a tragedy rather; the tragedy of a man endowed with very special talents, which in a different age and under other circumstances might have brought him everlasting fame and fortune.

Had he, for example, been fated to live in the roistering days of the early eighteenth century, he might have emulated the romantic deeds of his fellow countryman, champion cattle-lifter and national hero Rob Roy; or had destiny decreed that he should have followed in the footsteps of Robert Clive in India, his body might have found an honoured resting-place among the British dead in Westminster Abbey, instead of in a humble country grave on the banks of the Orange River.

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